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JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

H. C. PEDDER.

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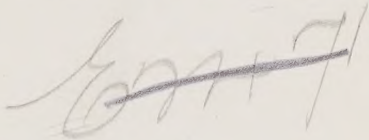
RIGHT HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

A Study

OF

HIS CHARACTER AS A STATESMAN



BY

H. C. PEDDER

"Self-trust is the first secret of success."—EMERSON.

"True courage, as well as true wisdom, is not distrustful of itself."—HAZLITT.

"Fame comes only when deserved, and then it is as inevitable as destiny, for it is destiny."—LONGFELLOW.

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I

EARLY PERIOD AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS —INFLUENCE OF MR. GLADSTONE AND MR. BRIGHT—DOMINANT FORCES.

ADMITTING it to be almost impossible to thoroughly and satisfactorily analyse the qualities that constitute a striking personality, it is at least possible to gain a tolerably clear insight into the general character of those forces which dominate and determine the drift of thought and feeling. In a general sense there are certain broad and distinctive outlines which indicate, in every human being, the nature and quality of those indwelling forces which are the real determining conditions of character. And in few instances have these inward conditions been more clearly and definitely expressed than they are in Mr. Chamberlain's character as a public man.

Commencing active life at an early age, and under circumstances which did not seem very promising for a brilliant public career, he nevertheless soon felt the impulse of that growing power which it will be necessary to refer to more fully as we proceed. Not

having had the advantages of University training, he was not slow to perceive the importance of that intellectual breadth which University life is supposed to produce. The natural force and energy of his character seem to have quickened at a very early time the progressive expansion of those qualities which demand free scope and plenty of fresh air in the process of their unrestricted development. With this unfolding progressiveness and conscious growing tendency there has also always existed a strong practical turn of mind which has never allowed him to be carried away by gush or unreality. He seems never to have been deluded by dreams which were only dreams. All through the history of his political development we find energy sustained by constancy of purpose and a dislike of all things unreal and impracticable. At the same time he seems also to have been actuated by a consciousness that progress means something infinitely more than the prosperity and advancement of a favoured portion of the human race. It would, indeed, seem to be quite reasonable to conclude that this consciousness was primarily the cause of those Radical impulses and aims which were so pronounced when he first entered the political arena. It does not in the least affect this view to find that this phase of his character is at the present time not so strikingly manifest. The overshadowing influence of present circumstances may apparently relegate these impulses and tendencies to a secondary position. But they do not necessarily destroy them. Their existence is as real now as it ever was, even though a process of modification has produced

certain consequences of an important character. From the earliest stages of his political life Mr. Chamberlain has always been a Possibilist. And in a very real sense he remains a Possibilist to the present day; provided we understand rm to mean nothing subversive or revolutionary. Without being in the least a dreamer of strange dreams, it has always been Mr. Chamberlain's opinion that it is the duty of the Government to mitigate, by judicious legislation, the condition of the aged poor, and to alleviate, as far as possible, other evils of a similar nature.

It is quite possible that the quickening of Mr. Chamberlain's generous impulses was to some extent due to his early contact with Mr. Bright's humane enthusiasm and breadth of sympathy. It is also possible that he was impressed by that fine insight into the needs of humanity which entered so largely into Mr. Gladstone's character, and gave to this eminent statesman a loftiness of aim and nobility of purpose. During the early period of Mr. Chamberlain's political career it was only natural that Mr. Bright, in particular, should make a deep impression upon him; and it is equally natural that such an impression once made upon a strong nature, would never be effaced, even though it may apparently become less distinct and definite. The truth is that in politics, as in ordinary life, there is an impressionability of youth which is apt to produce enthusiasm, as well as exuberance of energy. This in a measure explains why the initial stages of Mr. Chamberlain's political life were characterised by an overflow in a

special direction. There is perhaps a sense in which it was impossible for one possessing Mr. Chamberlain's temperament to thoroughly absorb the warm emotional flow of Mr. Bright. But this does not prevent us from seeing that Mr. Chamberlain was powerfully influenced by Mr. Bright's splendid oratorical powers.

In this connection it must be remembered that some of Mr. Bright's finest speeches were delivered in Birmingham, and must therefore have appealed in an especial manner to the unfolding possibilities of Mr. Chamberlain's active mind. In recognising the importance of this influence, and its effect on the general drift of Mr. Chamberlain's views, we must not, however, lose sight of the fact that, even at this early time, there was in some respects a great difference between the aims of Mr. Bright and those of Mr. Chamberlain. Where Mr. Bright was limited in his views by the comparatively narrow horizon of the orthodox doctrines of the Manchester or Cobdenite Political Economy, Mr. Chamberlain's views were of a wider and more comprehensive character. In the greater clearness of his perceptive powers the junior member for Birmingham was able to see more clearly and at a greater distance than the great orator of the Corn Law agitation. There was something in Mr. Bright's earnest and impassioned manner which could not fail to quicken the stream of sympathy that seems to run through Mr. Chamberlain's early political period. But there was at the same time a stronger intellectual grasp on Mr. Chamberlain's part; and this widened his views as well as strengthened

his judgment. Even at this time we discover indications of that independent and self-reliant spirit which, in his fuller development, has become such a conspicuous feature. The point of interest consists in the fact that, with his early manifestation of strength and clearness, we plainly discern a warmth of feeling in Mr. Chamberlain very unlike the embodiment of cold-blooded selfishness which he is frequently represented to be. Unless we clearly realise the existence of this quality as a force in Mr. Chamberlain's political career, we cannot correctly gauge the tendency of that early Radicalism which laid the foundations of his importance and success.

In one of his early speeches he very clearly defined his views in this particular direction. "If," he said, "the rich want their rights to be respected, as they ought to be, they are bound in return to respect the rights of their less fortunate brethren. It is said that these views lead straight to Communism, and that Communism is a very terrible thing. Let us understand each other. I for one never thought it possible or expedient to bring everything down to a dead level. I have never supposed you could equalise the capacities and conditions of men. The idler, the drunkard, the criminal, and the fool must bear the brunt of their defects. The strong man and the able man will always be first in the race. But what I say is that the community as a whole, co-operating for the benefit of all, may do something to make the life of all its citizens, and, above all, of the poorest of them, somewhat better, somewhat nobler, somewhat happier."

As we read these words we have no reason to doubt the earnestness and the sincerity of the man who uttered them. We are, by the nature of his temperament, precluded from thinking that he was carried away by a rush of temporary excitement. Nor was he speaking merely as an enthusiastic Socialistic dreamer. The truth is he was deeply conscious of the existence of evils which were crying aloud for a remedy, and he desired to deal with them in a spirit of thoroughness and liberal-mindedness. In the attitude of his mind we can plainly see the operation of those masculine forces which so thoroughly underlie his character. And we can also discern the action of a sympathetic movement seeking to give vitality and efficacy to conceptions of an intellectual character.

About this time Mr. Chamberlain was severely censured for his doctrine of Natural Rights, and there were many who predicted disastrous consequences as the inevitable result of his views. But these criticisms and gloomy prognostications do not appear to have made the slightest impression upon him. Not that he considered himself above criticism, or that he was so obstinately wedded to his opinions as to be incapable of change. Instead of this, the explanation of his firmness and indifference seems to be found in that strength and clearness which sustained him in convictions based on reason and close observation.

Besides this, his firmness of attitude in this respect enables us to see that the man who is regarded by many as an unscrupulous and self-seeking politician

was, in his early career at least, a sincere and earnest advocate of liberal reforms, aiming primarily at an improvement in the condition of the masses. In fact, it does not seem too much to say that the one unchanging factor in Mr. Chamberlain's political career has been his desire to improve the condition of the poor, and to assist by legislation those who cannot help themselves. His views in this direction have never been Utopian or extravagantly optimistic. But he certainly has shown, from the beginning of his political life, an unwavering faith in legislative possibilities of this character.

It is quite possible that "the still sad music of humanity" does not appeal to Mr. Chamberlain as it does to those nobly sympathetic natures which listen with overflowing compassion to the everlasting moan of human sorrow. There is perhaps a sense in which the hardening tendency of political ambition deadens sensibility to that deep and mysterious undertone of sadness which runs through human life, and which Sophocles heard ages ago on the Ægean sea. Still it is quite evident that the man who is often regarded as devoid of sympathy and kindliness of nature is not really insensible to "the turbid ebb and flow of human misery." He may be dwarfed by comparison with those who, in the fulness of their sympathy, and in their large-heartedness, would like to lift poor, weak, struggling humanity in their arms and wipe away its tears. But it still remains true, after we have made all deductions for self-assertiveness and political considerations, that Mr. Chamberlain is not devoid of humane views and generous impulses.

Accompanying his desire to assist, by wise and humane legislation, those who need assistance, we find in his early political life an implicit faith in the collective wisdom of the people. In his address to his constituents after his first election to Parliament, he said: "What is the underlying principle of Birmingham Liberalism? It is that we trust the people, that we have a firm confidence in their good sense and patriotism, and if the greatest good of the greatest number be, as I believe it to be, the chief end of government, then we think that the people best understand their own affairs, and are best able to secure their highest interests, without at the same time doing injustice to any class or section. Mistakes of the people are less dangerous to the commonwealth than the mistakes of a minority or of a privileged class." This was the foundation of Mr. Chamberlain's political creed when he entered Parliament; and there is no reason to think that his views in this respect have been altered. There is, on the contrary, every reason to believe that he still trusts the people most thoroughly, and places the utmost reliance on their sound common sense, their discriminative ability, and their patriotism.

Among the causes that have contributed to the formation of Mr. Chamberlain's political views, and the general robustness of his policy, it is somewhat important to bear in mind the probabilities growing out of his connection with Birmingham. In this respect it is not unreasonable to trace a portion of his power to the inspiration directly drawn from Birmingham, as an important centre of independence and

self-reliance. The prominent part taken by Birmingham in the great Reform agitation, and its active part in the later movement of 1867, would be in themselves sufficient to quicken the energy and strengthen the spirit of a young and able politician, entering into the excitement of the struggle under a full consciousness of his ability, and having a thorough belief in himself. It would, indeed, almost seem to be a certainty that Mr. Chamberlain must have derived a very considerable invigorating influence from his close connection with a city which was strong enough and brave enough to defy the Duke of Wellington during the agitation of the first Reform Bill.

In alluding to the possibility of this influence, it is not intended to convey the idea that strong men spring spontaneously from the soil of Birmingham. Nor is it to be inferred that the capital of the Midlands is a nursery from which stalwart and astute politicians are produced with ease and rapidity. But it is nevertheless quite true that there is such a thing as a distinctive Birmingham quality which in all probability influenced the tendency of Mr. Chamberlain's political views. It is also comparatively easy to discover that this quality still manifests itself in that perfect adaptation between Mr. Chamberlain and his constituents which it will be necessary to treat more fully later on. At this particular phase of our subject it is enough to notice the possibility of this action and reaction in an incidental way, and direct our attention for the moment to a more personal view of certain qualities which have been the principal causes that have produced the statesman as he now is.

Whatever may have been the influence of this or that particular circumstance in its relation to the process of Mr. Chamberlain's political development, it is perfectly obvious that his success is mainly due to those qualities which underlie his character and render him so full of progressive force. As we study his political career, and analyse his methods of reasoning, we are strongly convinced that one cause which has contributed largely to his success has been his aim to be always reasonable. There may be times when his reasonableness seems to be overshadowed by extreme self-assertion; and we may even detect, during his earlier stages, what appears to be a desire to domineer rather than to convince. But it is quite possible that this is more apparent than real. It is also equally possible that these instances of extreme self-assertiveness may be due to superabundance of energy and self-reliance rather than to inflated self-esteem and narrow egotism. The truth is that Mr. Chamberlain has always pursued a line of his own in presenting his subjects, and in endeavouring to carry his hearers with him. Always strong and self-conscious, he does not like to be thwarted in his attempt to reach his desired end. The idea of failure on his part never seems to enter his mind; and if he is opposed, he does not hesitate to strike down anything that stands in his way. This has always been one of his characteristics. But it is also a common characteristic with strong men generally when they make up their minds to attain a definite end. With this strong self-assertion on Mr. Chamberlain's part we

are, however, bound to recognise a distinct and definite appeal to reason as the arbiter on all questions presented by him. He reverses the usual methods, and tries to reach the heart through the brain, not the brain through the heart. His arguments are always compact and lucid, and are addressed primarily to the perceptive and reasoning faculties. Without in any way underestimating the importance of sentiment, he prefers to appeal to his hearers through the acuteness of their judgment and the discriminating power of their logical moods. His success in this direction is, indeed, very conclusive proof as to his ability and his intellectual clearness. Very wisely he has consistently adhered to a style of delivery which most fitly expresses the definiteness and directness of his views. He does not beat about the bush as many of our public men do; and he never attempts to conceal or confuse real issues by unreal verbosity. What he has to say is always to the point, and is as much the result of logical sequence of thought as it is of clear and forcible expression. Nor does he seek to mislead his hearers by inundating them with glittering generalities which seem to mean much while really meaning nothing.

We may like or dislike the energy and push that have contributed so largely to Mr. Chamberlain's political success, and we may honestly differ from him as to the drift of his policy. But we are not thereby prevented from seeing that he is, in some respects, the most conspicuous statesman of the present day. For this reason it cannot be uninteresting or unimportant to study him carefully and

dispassionately. Under a calm and unbiassed examination of his character and influence as a statesman we will find much food for thought, and much that will indicate the real cause of his strength and success. Among other things we cannot fail to be impressed with the thorough manner in which he seems to be always imbued with his theme, and the steady concentration of purpose which seems never to leave him. With this quality of thoroughness he also seems to possess a very large reserve force which he can always draw upon if necessary. He does not carry his hearers with him because they are captured by his eloquence or charmed by the magnetic influence of his personality. His triumphs appear to be, in the strictest sense, those of pure reason acting in harmony with a strong progressive force. There are times when, in his exceptional quickness and clearness, he is not unlike a well-trained athlete who is conscious of his strength, and is in a state of perpetual readiness.

If we attempt to get at the true inwardness of the indwelling forces that shape and determine his character, we are especially struck by the absence of everything that would be likely to produce indefiniteness and unwieldiness in his ideas. The more closely we study the movements of his mind and the quality of his thoughts, the more clearly do we perceive that there is, behind these phenomena, an intellectual perspicacity which gushes out spontaneously in clearness and definiteness of expression. It is, in all probability, owing to this fact that he is, as a rule, deficient in that fusion of reason and passion which is

always present in the highest forms of oratory. And yet Mr. Chamberlain is not without a certain degree of upwardness which has its effect on those who listen to him, and in a less degree on those who read his speeches. His deficiency in that imaginative power which elevates and illumines every subject which it touches is in a measure counterbalanced by the strength and firmness of his intellectual grasp.

There is also a complexity in Mr. Chamberlain's character which renders it very difficult to detach any one particular quality and treat it with any degree of certainty as the controlling force. There is, under all circumstances, a perplexing complexity in human nature which very often eludes the most careful study, and leaves us wholly at a loss to account for the existence of dissimilar and conflicting qualities in the same person. Yet there is a great difference between the effect produced by these conditions on a strong character, in which certain qualities are strongly assertive, and the effect produced by the same conditions on a merely commonplace character, in which there is nothing particularly striking or impressive. Whilst it is therefore true that, in the study of Mr. Chamberlain, we are necessarily hindered to some extent by these complex conditions, it is equally true that we are assisted by a definiteness and distinctness in certain leading and dominant qualities. In a very real manner these qualities are so far charged with the self-consciousness of their possessor as to enable us to recognise, without difficulty, the measure of their importance. If we are compelled by certain conditions to admit the limited range of our perceptive

faculties, we are materially aided in our study by those qualities which thrust themselves into prominence, and by their conspicuousness invite attention. Fortunately we are, in the case of Mr. Chamberlain, very much assisted by these circumstances. There is in his character nothing diluted, nothing tasteless, and nothing flat. Nor are there any indications that he is unreal, or tainted with that hypocritical humility which is so frequently mistaken for genuine self-effacement. What he is, he appears to be. And believing thoroughly in himself, he presses onward in a spirit of manly self-reliance, sustained by his restless energy and his indomitable will.

In an examination of Mr. Chamberlain's characteristics it is also necessary to attach due importance to his pugnacious spirit. There can be no doubt that his political success is in a measure due to his possession of this quality. He is certainly a hard hitter and an unsparing critic. And naturally enough his biting sarcasm and his pitiless denunciation do not arouse in his adversaries a tranquil and agreeable frame of mind. Still it is only fair to admit that his fighting qualities are generally used in self-defence. It is also well to remember that it is quite impossible for a man possessing Mr. Chamberlain's force and energy to escape antagonisms. A merely casual glance will be sufficient to show us that it is only the purely negative characters who glide through life without encountering serious opposition. In a measure their weakness, unimportance, and insignificance insure them against danger of this kind. With strong men the circumstances are, however, entirely different.

In their case, even when they succeed most fully, they are as much objects of envy as they are of admiration. A really strong man commands attention by sheer force of character and the authority of intellectual strength. He compels the mob to stop and listen to him. At times he is driven by circumstances to imitate the horse in kicking at flies which irritate and annoy him. But he is, by virtue of his inherent force, a commanding figure in the world. He cannot help making enemies as well as friends. He could not possibly be a strong and able man and yet please every one. And these conditions apply very largely to the position occupied by Mr. Chamberlain at the present time. From some quarters he is the frequent recipient of attacks of political animosity which are as unscrupulous as they are venomous. And yet these diatribes do not seem to make any impression. It is not that Mr. Chamberlain enjoys the blessing of political invulnerability, and it is not that his indifference is the result of insensibility. The real explanation is that, in his strength and self-reliance, he possesses a power of resistance which enables him to regard with absolute unconcern those spiteful attacks which are so often directed against him. This attitude of indifference would seem to be much less due to imperviousness than it is to unruffled composure produced by a consciousness of strength acting through a well-balanced temperament.

In estimating the measure and the importance of Mr. Chamberlain's influence on our political life, it is, of course, quite possible to admit that some of his ideas and methods constitute a new departure in our

diplomacy. It may even be conceded that the advantages of this new departure have yet to be demonstrated. But quite apart from these considerations, it cannot be denied that he is a most important political force at the present time. Nor can it be reasonably doubted that his influence, great as it is, is likely to increase, and to become more and more an animating force in our national life.

II

CHANGE OF VIEWS—DEMOCRACY AND IMPERIALISM —COLONIAL POLICY—EVIDENCES OF SENTIMENT.

WITH respect to Mr. Chamberlain's position at the present time, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the marked difference which exists between some of his earlier speeches and his views of to-day. At first sight there almost seems to be an impassable gulf separating the two. But it is neither wise nor just to be hasty in our conclusions; although it is, of course, always well to look facts in the face.

As an illustration of this marked change, we have only to compare what Mr. Chamberlain said when he was Mayor of Birmingham with what he now says. On the occasion referred to he said, "I will confess to you that I am so parochially minded that I look with greater satisfaction to our annexation of the gas and of the water to our scientific frontier in the improvement area than I do to the results of that Imperial policy which has given us Cyprus and the Transvaal; and I am prouder of having been engaged with you in warring against ignorance and disease and crime in Birmingham than if I had been the author of the

Zulu war, or had instigated the invasion of Afghanistan." These were Mr. Chamberlain's views when he was being acted upon by the flowing tide of his Radical impulses. They were perfectly genuine and sincere; and they really represent a spontaneous expression of feelings which fairly embodied his political creed at that time. But what a change has since come over the spirit of his dream! The question is, ought we to regard this change from a merely superficial point of view, and hastily denounce it as a glaring inconsistency, indicative of weakness and inconstancy of purpose? or should we endeavour to discover some underlying cause which does not appear on the surface? As we proceed with our subject it will be necessary to refer more fully to the operation of this underlying force. But in the meantime we shall have prepared ourselves for a fuller treatment of Mr. Chamberlain's growing power if we govern our views by a proper recognition of an important formative influence which has yet to be considered.

It is always an easy matter to pronounce a rash and unintelligent judgment on questions relating to the action and motives of others. To some minds it is a positive enjoyment to belittle the attainments of eminent men; and it is also a pleasure to some persons to be always censorious in their opinions. There is, indeed, a very common form of dogmatic opinionativeness which is always ready to hang the accused first and try him afterwards. But this is certainly not the way to arrive at a fair and reasonable conclusion. It is also a poor substitute for that

patient and dispassionate consideration which aims at separating the seeming from the real ; endeavouring at the same time to examine all questions in a thorough and comprehensive manner. Besides this, it is well to bear in mind the fact that the man who is incapable of change is necessarily as unprogressive as he is uninteresting.

He may hug the delusion that the world stands still because he is fossilised. But if the delusion pleases him, it accomplishes nothing, and ultimately resolves itself into its constituent elements of egotism and nothingness.

When we attempt to deal candidly and intelligently with an apparent inconsistency in the character of a prominent individual, our real difficulty consists in the liability to confuse tendencies which are distinct, and to mistake insincerity of motive for sincerity of conviction. This is a difficulty which we cannot eliminate ; and even under the most favoured conditions we are likely to err in our judgment. In this particular instance, however, it is only fair to Mr. Chamberlain to say that the indications point clearly to a real and genuine change, not to an apparent one founded on expediency. Unquestionably circumstances have considerably influenced Mr. Chamberlain's views, and wider experience has had its inevitable effect on his general character. But there is nothing in this fact which would warrant us in attributing to this process of change the qualities of insincerity and instability. There is, however, a great deal in this enlargement of Mr. Chamberlain's views which seems to be intimately connected with the development of

that Democratic ideal which has always been, and still is, the animating force of his policy.

From his present point of view Mr. Chamberlain seems to enter thoroughly and intelligently into the quality and tendency of the nation's aspirations. Looking at important questions in a large and comprehensive manner, he possesses the rare gift of estimating at their true value those warm pulsations of thought and feeling that run through the length and breadth of the British Empire. He does not regard this mighty Empire of ours as a complicated machine that needs occasional superintendence, and a little tinkering now and then. He does regard it as a living organism capable of infinite growth and expansion, and growing daily and hourly in obedience to an impulse from within. This impulse he regards as the spirit of our destiny, breathing into our aims and aspirations the breath of life, and bidding us go bravely forward in our work of enlightenment and emancipation.

When we get a clear idea as to the meaning of Mr. Chamberlain's present Imperialism, we soon discover that it rests primarily on the development of those Democratic principles which he advocated at the beginning of his political career. It is very probable that this statement will be denied by those who prefer to regard Mr. Chamberlain's present attitude as a departure from, and a repudiation of, his former principles. But the claim to continuity is nevertheless well founded. Having passed from the rudimentary stages of his political development to his present position of greater maturity, he may be regarded at

the present time as the exponent of enlightened Democratic ideas widened and stimulated by Imperialistic aims and tendencies. It is as absurd as it is unfair to class Mr. Chamberlain with those inflated Jingoes who swagger about with a defiant air, apparently believing that the world was made for the comfort and convenience of the British lion. In the light of wider experience, there has certainly been an expansion in Mr. Chamberlain's views which has brought him into harmony with aims and aspirations that he did not at one time properly understand. Still it remains strictly true that his dominant impulse appears to be unchanged ; and it seems to be equally true that his present Imperialism is really consistent with the progressive views which first brought him into prominence.

The truth is we cannot do justice to Mr. Chamberlain's Imperialistic bias unless we are prepared to admit that there are, or may be, certain broad principles underlying the Democratic idea, and adapting it to a sane and vigorous Imperialism. What is possible in this direction has been clearly proved by the expansive policy of the United States of America, from which policy it is easy to see that the Democratic spirit does not necessarily encourage the dwarfishness and narrowness of little Englandism. Instead of this, we find in the widening policy of the United States a convincing proof that a sound and healthy Democracy is really favourable to a strong and intelligent Imperialism. In this Imperialism we shall find nothing wild or extravagant, and nothing indicative of a restless and insatiate ambition. But we

shall certainly find much which will warrant us in thinking that there is nothing in Mr. Chamberlain's present Imperialistic tendencies which cannot be reconciled with the expansion of his Democratic views.

In this connection we must not lose sight of the fact that Mr. Chamberlain's idea of Democracy would seem to be something much higher than a blind and ignorant worship of Demos. As a shrewd and observant statesman he cannot fail to see that there are certain tendencies in all Democratic movements which are apt to place political leaders in the position of "listening nervously at one end of a speaking-tube which receives at its other end the suggestions of a lower intelligence." Yet this does not prevent him from holding fast to his original faith in the preponderating advantage of Democracy. Nor does it prevent him from believing that a sane Imperialism is the natural product of the higher forms of Democratic patriotism. In a very real sense Mr. Chamberlain's view of the British ideal is that of a great and prosperous Empire, united by a common interest, and animated by a splendid patriotism that shall be equal to any emergency.

Because he believes thoroughly in the future of his country, and because he heartily encourages closer relations between the Colonies and the Mother Country, his ideas go far beyond the views that have usually prevailed at the Colonial Office. Partly as the result of circumstances, and partly in consequence of his natural alertness of mind and his definiteness of aim, he has infused new life and energy into our

Colonial policy. As Mr. Chamberlain understands the British Empire, it is in the fullest sense a living reality stirred by a strong progressive instinct which persistently aims at world-wide power and supremacy. It would seem to be impossible for Mr. Chamberlain to think of the British Empire as a mere geographical expression which is liable to be obscured by haziness and nebulosity.

The truth is his Colonial policy is as much saturated with the idea of community of interest as it is with the idea of community of race. There is nothing dreamy or illusory about his views in this respect. There is no attempt on his part to substitute the dazzling but temporary effect of a pyrotechnic display for the less attractive but more permanent effect of common sense and far-seeing prudence. As a matter of fact, his Colonial policy is an amalgamation of common sense and comprehensiveness of view such as we would naturally expect to find in an exceptionally gifted business man. He knows perfectly well that the British Empire is a wonderfully complex whole, full of many various and conflicting interests. But he also knows that there is, beneath this complexity and diversity, a very real union of sentiment which is capable of weathering the severest storm or the most dangerous crisis. He is not unmindful of that tendency towards decentralisation of power which is a natural consequence of the growing importance of our self-governing Colonies. Yet he is equally alive to the fact that it only requires fairness of treatment and a proper appreciation to render indissoluble the

connection between the Colonies and the Mother Country. It is because Mr. Chamberlain's policy as Colonial Secretary is as just as it is comprehensive that he is so popular in the Colonies.

Like Burke, Mr. Chamberlain believes that abstract liberty, like other abstractions, is not to be found. It must inhere in some sensible object. And in the case of our Colonies it is not only liberty reduced to real and tangible existence under clearly defined forms, but liberty according to English ideas. It is also probable that Mr. Chamberlain goes even further than this in his agreement with Burke, and thinks, with him, that the spirit of liberty is probably stronger in the English Colonies than in any other people. What was true in Burke's time of the American Colonies is equally true to-day with respect to all Colonies under British rule. It is not too much to say that Mr. Chamberlain thoroughly understands and appreciates this spirit. Nor is it too much to say that he enters into it and encourages it to the fullest possible extent, subject, of course, to the supreme authority of the Imperial Government.

In the discharge of his duties as Colonial Secretary Mr. Chamberlain appears to be animated by a keen appreciation of the inter-relation and inter-dependence that ought to exist between all parts of our Colonial Empire. He does not shut his eyes to difficulties which are inseparable from the conditions of our national growth and expansion. He never attempts to evade important issues by taking refuge in a policy of procrastination and flabbiness. Instead of this, he is always ready to face an

emergency in a manly way ; and he never loses himself in a labyrinth of tortuous indecision and nervous uncertainty. He is, in fact, much more likely to err in being over-confident than he is in being nervous and undecided.

There are those who think that Mr. Chamberlain's policy is too much charged with the positive force of his self-assertive nature. But even if this objection is well-founded, it is certainly better to have a definite policy, supported by strength and energy, than it is to drift aimlessly about in a state of vapid insipidity. It is, of course, to be admitted that cautiousness in expression, as well as in action, is a very desirable quality. The danger is that this quality of cautiousness is sometimes allowed to become abnormally developed, and to degenerate into weakness and vacillation. This attitude of mind, it is easy to see, is necessarily fatal to a strong and consistent policy. There is in public life, as in private life, an idolatrous worship of expediency which inevitably ends in the extinction of manliness and moral courage.

If therefore Mr. Chamberlain has done nothing else, he has done much to counteract the demoralising effect of this dangerous tendency. He has also, by his larger and wider view, clothed with life and activity the dry bones of our previously inert Colonial policy. The bluntness and directness which are sometimes objected to in him are, after all, the natural consequences of an inward force which is as assertive as it is energetic. There may be occasions when these qualities are a little too conspicuous. But the point to be considered is that, as to their

general effect, their advantages are far in excess of their disadvantages.

After we have made every allowance for possible deductions, it still remains true that the net result of Mr. Chamberlain's policy is a positive gain to the nation. In this policy there are no wild and feverish dreams goading on to rashness and madness; although there are those who insinuate that Mr. Chamberlain is suffering from some such form of political delirium tremens. The real truth of the matter is that Mr. Chamberlain's policy draws its inspiration from an unwavering determination to uphold and perpetuate the interests of the British Empire. On this point his attitude is absolutely unequivocal and uncompromising. And it is well that it is so. There is, in the political world, no dearth of pliable Opportunists who are always ready to make the best bargain they can. But there is always a scarcity of strong men having the courage of their convictions, and believing in the sustaining power of an invincible self-reliance. It is by means of such men, and not through weak and unreliable politicians, that the aspirations of a great nation are encouraged and carried into effect. Their conception of what our national ideal ought to be may be in some respects imperfect and inadequate. But the general effect of their policy is to strengthen our position at home and abroad, and to educate the popular mind to a high and noble view of what the British Empire really is, and what it is capable of becoming.

As an objection to this view of Mr. Chamberlain's

achievements as Colonial Secretary, it will be urged by some that his South African policy disqualifies him from receiving such commendation. But is this adverse opinion founded on facts? Or does an intelligent appreciation of all the circumstances of the case warrant us in regarding this policy as a striking illustration of clearness of perception and definiteness of aim. Where a weak man would have floundered and made matters much worse by hesitation, Mr. Chamberlain grasped the situation with intelligence and firmness. It is always an easy matter to be wise after the event; and it is never very difficult to learn the lessons which experience hammers into our heads. In this respect the most sluggish intellect is on an equal footing with the most brilliant mind. It does, however, require more than average ability to decide promptly and wisely in the face of a sudden and important crisis. That Mr. Chamberlain did so decide time will more and more demonstrate.

If ever a war was forced upon any nation, the South African war was forced upon us. It is directly traceable to Boer intrigue and insolence; and it is the merest folly to attempt to ignore this fact. Between cowardly acquiescence and a determined stand on our part there was no alternative left us. Very wisely, and very properly, Mr. Chamberlain preferred the latter course. He could not, indeed, have acted otherwise without cutting himself adrift from the Imperial policy of the Government. Nor could he have handled the question in a weak and irresolute manner without being false to those qualities

which have given him his present prominence and importance. Whatever our views may be as to this or that particular aspect of the war, and whatever we may feel in the way of regret and sorrow, it still remains true that, in the discharge of his duties as Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain has displayed great ability and a complete mastery of his subject.

There was a time when, as a member of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, he thought that the Boers could appreciate magnanimous treatment. But experience has completely dispelled this fallacy ; and he has not hesitated to admit his error. From his present point of view Mr. Chamberlain knows perfectly well that British supremacy in South Africa demands a policy that shall be as strong as it is just. Into this policy it will be necessary to introduce as much clemency as possible. But the dominant qualities must be strength, firmness, and prudence. It is as well to remember, in this connection, that Mr. Chamberlain was too long under Mr. Bright's influence to be indifferent to the importance of moral forces and the efficacy of humane views. Still he is, as a shrewd and careful observer, quite conscious of the difference between a generous sentiment governed by reason and that form of rampant sentimentalism which disregards reason and refuses to be controlled by it.[1]

[1] The termination of the war, since the above was written, has made it apparent that the Boers are not altogether impervious to the good influences of generosity. But it must be always remembered, in this connection, that they appreciate our generous treatment because they respect our strength. If there had been in our attitude the least sign of weakness or

The unexpected prolongation of the war was not a matter for which Mr. Chamberlain was responsible. But he is responsible, as Colonial Secretary, for the adoption and prosecution of a policy which shall effectually prevent a recurrence of the evils which caused the war in South Africa. On this point Mr. Chamberlain's views are perfectly clear and definite. To do him justice, his views on Patriotism appear to be animated by a spirit almost suggestive of Spartan earnestness and sincerity. In this direction we find the same breadth and strength that we find underlying his character in other respects. There is in his attitude nothing boastful or blustering. But we see plainly the manifestation of that calm, self-reliant spirit which never loses confidence in itself, and never allows the fluctuations of time and circumstances to disturb its deeply rooted faith in the permanence of our country's greatness.

"I have faith," Mr. Chamberlain once said, "in our race and our nation. I believe that with all the force and enthusiasm of which Democracy alone is capable they will complete and maintain that splendid edifice of greatness which, commenced under aristocratic auspices, has received in these later times its greatest extension; and that the fixity of purpose and strength of will which are necessary to this end will be supplied

indecision, the result would have been very different. It is because the terms of peace contain no trace of timidity and vacillation that the result has been so satisfactory and promising. Liberality and firmness have been wisely and perfectly blended, and this sagacious policy is almost sure to be productive of enduring peace, provided it is not hereafter exposed to injudicious tinkering.

by that national patriotism which sustains the most strenuous efforts and makes possible the greatest sacrifices." Again he says: "When so much has altered—persons, opinions, and circumstances — I should think it a poor boast that I alone had remained unchanged; but in view of the confidence that you have now vouchsafed to me, I ask you to believe that, through all the vicissitudes of things, I have constantly sought—it may be with faltering steps and by mistaken roads—the greatness of the Empire and the true welfare of the people at large. . . . A vague attachment to the whole human race is a poor substitute for the performance of the duties of a citizen; and professions of universal philanthropy afford no excuse for neglecting the interest of one's own country."

It will be noticed that, in the expression of these views, Mr. Chamberlain emphasises his faith in the possibilities of Democracy. But it is also noticeable that he emphatically discourages everything which leads to weakness and aimlessness. He also entirely discountenances the idea of "the weary Titan staggering under the too vast orb of his fate," and unable to sustain the burden of our vast and growing Empire. Believing, as he does, in the future of Democracy, he also believes in the reality of those patriotic impulses which lift the Democratic ideal above the emasculating tendency of narrow and inane views. He is in this respect an ardent and earnest advocate of everything that helps to stimulate the nation's thought and feeling in the right direction. When we get at the real meaning of Mr. Chamberlain's glowing patriotism,

it becomes evident that we cannot do him justice unless we are prepared to admit that there are, under his apparently cold and calculating nature, certain phases of sentiment which are not superficially apparent. Indeed, we find this truth reflected in a measure in his own words. He once said, "It is not interest, in particular, that governs the world, but sentiment. . . . Sentiment plays a large part in the life of a nation." We are, of course, quite aware of the truth of this general statement; and there is nothing original in it. But when we find it coming from a man who is so commonly regarded as a political prodigy in whom there is no sentiment, it causes us to look below the surface for an explanation of his hold on the popular mind.

In this way we are reminded that men who are impervious to the vitalising quality of sentiment cannot make any lasting impression on the age in which they live. To be able to exercise a strong and enduring influence a man must be something more than a mere machine, wound up to play certain tunes with unfailing regularity, or to produce certain definite results on special occasions. A merely mechanical performance of this sort may answer for a time, and may for a brief interval appear very wonderful. But it bears too obviously the mark of the tool upon it; and because it is devoid of life and growing power, it must sooner or later come to grief. Like all other shams, it must inevitably pay the penalty incurred by imposture, and come to an ignominious end. The circumstances are, however, entirely different when we approach the study of a

really strong man who bears the evidences of a strong vitalising force acting on his character, and keeping alive the power of his influence. In Mr. Chamberlain's case this vitalising force does not appear on the surface. Yet its existence is very real, even though it does not manifest itself in a conspicuous manner. The predominance of the qualities of strength and energy renders it difficult to perceive the action of the less assertive quality of sentiment. Still there is certainly present in Mr. Chamberlain's nature a kind of rationalised emotional force which has helped to give to his Colonial policy its breadth of view and its comprehensiveness of purpose.

The foundation of this policy is, of course, a well-balanced judgment, accompanied by clearness of perception and alertness of mind. But it could never possess the life and spirit which it has, were it the product only of a cold, analytical mind. If it is impossible to think of Mr. Chamberlain as one likely to be carried away by a strong emotional current, it is equally impossible to understand his power and influence if we entirely eliminate the action of sentiment under the guidance of reason. Under all circumstances he will retain his self-possession and his equilibrium. But this does not necessarily mean that he is emotionally dead, and therefore insensible to the life and the warmth that stir into activity the hopes and aspirations of humanity.

We are also unjust to Mr. Chamberlain if we attribute to him the desire to drive the chariot of Helios with the rashness of Phaeton. There is nothing in his career which seems to warrant us in

forming this opinion. Nor is there anything which seems to indicate the probability of his taking unnecessary leaps in the dark. He is certainly boldly progressive, and has no sympathy with that stationariness which is always inhospitable to new ideas. But this does not of necessity imply rashness or an unwise disregard of consequences. There was a time when Mr. Chamberlain was looked upon by some persons as the representative of a policy of Vandalism, which was likely to do a great deal of harm. Those days have, however, passed away; and the conditions now are not unfavourable to a dispassionate and just estimate of one of the most prominent characters of the present day.

He is no longer considered to be like the woman of the Eastern fable, who bore a torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other, that with the one she might burn up heaven, and with the other extinguish hell. Yet there is, even now, a reluctance in some quarters to deal fairly with Mr. Chamberlain's character and influence as a statesman. It is impossible, in view of his position and his proved ability, to liken him to the old woman in the fable. But it is still possible to minimise his attainments, and to exaggerate what are deemed his shortcomings and defects. And this is neither just nor generous. Nor is it, in addition to its unfairness, an adequate mode of examining the conditions which govern the movements of those mysterious phenomena that pass before us as we study the growth and development of an interesting character. It is easy enough to talk glibly about genius and talent, as if they were

things that could, without effort, be labelled and classified. It is also very easy to magnify defects, and to acknowledge in a niggardly way good qualities that cannot be denied. But it is not possible, in a merely perfunctory examination, to stifle the voice of prejudice, or to deal adequately and justly with the varying phases of human character.

If we desire that our opinions shall be intelligent as well as just, it is necessary to examine our subject from various points of view. What is really needed is diversity of perspective, and the ability to see clearly from different directions. It is not that in a study of Mr. Chamberlain's character we find any special evidence of many-sidedness or versatility. In reality there appears to be in him a deficiency as to both these qualities. Still it is impossible to be fair in our estimate if we do not lift ourselves above the limitations of narrow superficiality, and endeavour to penetrate below the surface of things to those deeper and more enduring conditions which are the real bases of character. In the world of mind, as in the world of matter, we get very imperfect and misleading ideas if we confine ourselves to a stationary position. As has been well said: "He who is continually changing his point of view will see more, and that too more clearly, than one who, statue-like, stands for ever upon the same pedestal, however lofty and well placed that pedestal may be."

Of course, this does not mean that instability of opinion is a desirable thing. But it does mean that comprehensiveness is an essential condition in a fair

and intelligent estimate of character. In the present instance our minds are naturally attracted by those qualities in Mr. Chamberlain's character which may be properly considered central or pivotal. This does not, however, remove the necessity of allowing for qualities which are not so pronounced or conspicuous. Nor does the prominence of certain dominant qualities prevent us from seeing that, in the robustness and progressive force of Mr. Chamberlain's policy, there exists a degree of sentiment which acts as an animating impulse, seeking to express itself as a form of national aspiration, governed by a vigorous and healthy ideal.

The fact is it would seem to be quite an error to suppose that Mr. Chamberlain's passionless manner indicates an entire absence of the warmth and glow of sentiment. There certainly is not, in his public life, any evidence of strong feeling or sentimental exuberance. But this does not warrant the opinion that he is wholly deficient in certain qualities which are inseparable from progressive momentum and real strength of character.

III

HOME RULE CRISIS—LIBERALISM AND UNIONISM—PLEA FOR CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM—REFERENCE TO LORD SALISBURY—DEMANDS OF THE FUTURE.

AMONG the causes that have contributed to Mr. Chamberlain's present position of power and influence, a prominent place must be assigned to his attitude at the time of Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule for Ireland. If we go back to this memorable crisis, there does not seem to be any reason for thinking that Mr. Chamberlain was insincere in his attempts to avert the disruption of the Liberal Party. The cause of the failure appears to have been really due to the impossibility of reconciling his own views with those of Mr. Gladstone. There certainly does not seem to be, in an unprejudiced examination of the circumstances, any reasonable ground for accusing him of insincerity. On the contrary, appearances favour the belief that he was actuated by motives which were the reverse of being insincere. As an evidence to this effect his letter to Mr. Gladstone, resigning his seat in the Cabinet, is of

importance. In this letter he gave his reasons in a plain and straightforward manner—it may even be said, in his usual characteristic manner. There was no trace of ambiguity, and there does not seem to have been any absence of honest and genuine conviction. Even then he seems to have had no desire to separate himself from the Liberal Government; and it is evident that he cherished for some time the hope that the Liberal Party would be reunited, and would be able, in this way, to carry on its work of progress and reform. That he was doomed to disappointment in this respect does not in any way detract from the sincerity of his wish, or from the earnestness of his hope. He hesitated as long as he could, and only abandoned hope when he found that it was quite impossible to adjust the differences of opinion that existed between Mr. Gladstone and himself.

When Lord Hartington was a decided Unionist, Mr. Chamberlain was, in a limited sense, a Home Ruler. He was not at that time opposed to the principle of Home Rule. But he was diametrically opposed to the form and character of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. It was really because he saw no chance of modification on Mr. Gladstone's part that he became an uncompromising opponent. At the time it seemed as if he had everything to lose and nothing to gain by separating himself from Mr. Gladstone. And this fact certainly tends to prove that his attitude was inspired by something higher than political speculation or shrewd scheming.

In a speech made by him at this time he said:

"There is not a man here who does not know that my personal and political interest would lead me to cast my lot in with the Prime Minister. Why, sir, not a day passes in which I do not receive dozens or scores of letters urging me, for my own sake, to vote for the Bill and dish the Whigs. Well, sir, the temptation is no doubt a great one, but after all I am not base enough to serve my personal ambition by betraying my country." Surely if language means anything these words convey a very clear and definite idea of the motives which governed Mr. Chamberlain's change of attitude at this particular time.

It is quite possible that there may be an inner history connected with this crisis which is as yet only imperfectly understood. But even if time and fuller knowledge reveal circumstances which may throw additional light on the subject, there does not appear to be any reason for doubting Mr. Chamberlain's sincerity of conviction and honesty of purpose. Indeed, the weight of evidence seems to be altogether in the opposite direction. This crisis seems to have been a most important point in Mr. Chamberlain's political career and practically decided the tendency of his future development. From his decision at this time the most important consequences have followed. He undoubtedly served his country in a spirit of loyal devotion when he refused to follow Mr. Gladstone in his well-meaning but mistaken policy. But he at the same time laid unconsciously the foundation of his own future greatness. The attitude taken up by him under a strong patriotic impulse has proved the turning-point of his political career. He has

been largely instrumental in burying beyond all hope of resurrection the kind of Irish Home Rule contemplated by Mr. Gladstone, and he has at the same time lifted himself into an elevated position by means of his uncompromising attitude in this respect. On this account it is of some importance that we should give him credit for the honesty and sincerity which appear to have constituted the starting-point of his present power and influence.

The real truth of the matter is that Mr. Chamberlain and many other eminent Liberals saw plainly at a very early period that Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill would be productive of the most disastrous results. And having seen the danger, they did not hesitate to range themselves on the side of patriotism and common sense. Nor can we fail to notice the wide difference between this attitude and the death-bed repentance which has recently been expressed by a small portion of the Liberal Party. In one case we recognise the operation of prudent foresight and unwavering conviction. In the other case it is not difficult to recognise the cry of desperation and the wail of contrition. Nor is the contrast less striking if we look at the difference between the effects likely to be produced by this belated repentance and the effects already produced by the strong and decided action of the Liberal Unionists.

So obvious is this difference between strength and steadfastness of purpose on the one hand and weakness and aimlessness on the other hand, that even the most ordinary observer can see in what direction the predominating influence is likely to exist for many

years. It is to all thoughtful minds a matter of great regret that the Liberal Party should be in the demoralised and inane condition in which it is at the present time. Still, the fact exists, and there is nothing gained by attempting to blink at it.

On general principles it is always an advantage that our two great political parties should be nearly equal in their Parliamentary strength. But when, as now, one is, by comparison, a giant, and the other a pigmy, it does not require a very wonderful power of discernment to see what this really means. Nor does it require any special gift of divination to enable us to see that the Unionist Party is likely to enjoy a very long lease of power. In this respect the indications are as clear as they can be, and leave no room for doubt as to the probable permanence of Unionist power. It is, of course, possible that some unexpected combination of circumstances may cause the Liberals to regain the confidence of the country, and thus win their way back to power. But as we do not live in the age of miracles this is an event which cannot be regarded otherwise than as a dim and shadowy possibility. In the absence of a sudden and senseless revulsion of feeling, which is not at all likely to be encouraged by the sound practical sense of the English people, it seems almost a certainty that the present nadir of Liberalism will continue for an indefinite period. And the probability of this long-continued weakness and prostration on the part of the Liberal Party is one of the strongest reasons for endeavouring to estimate the general drift or tendency of Mr. Chamberlain's increasing power. As we contem-

plate the probabilities of the future, and see plainly the almost certain perpetuity of Unionist policy, it becomes impossible to separate Mr. Chamberlain's widening influence from the life and activity of this policy.

Whether we agree with him or not, it is undeniable that his strength and tenacity are sure to exercise a very marked influence on the future policy of the Unionist Party. In his habit of saying what he means, and meaning what he says, he touches in an especial sense that feeling of manliness and directness which is so dear to the average Briton. Unlike some politicians who dwell perpetually in a region of hazy indefiniteness and kaleidoscopic changeability, Mr. Chamberlain appeals to the popular mind through the medium of clearness of purpose and definiteness of aim. He is not, politically, a wobbler; and he appears to be strongly opposed to that political insincerity which Lowell has so well described in his "Biglow Papers":—

> "I du believe in bein this
> Or thet, ez it may happen
> One way or t'other hendiest is,
> To ketch the people nappin;
> It aint by princerples nor men
> My prudent course is steadied,—
> I scent which pays the best, an' then—
> Go into it bald-headed."

It may perhaps be said that all politicians must be more or less governed by expediency, and therefore can never be wholly exempt from Lowell's scathing criticism. But there must always exist a wide difference between what is frequently an unavoidable

pressure of expediency and what is nothing more than the deliberate shiftiness of political scheming. At all events it certainly was not the intention of this eminent American poet and critic to convey the idea that every politician must necessarily be a humbug. In political life, as in other spheres of human activity, there will always be found those who "du believe in bein this or that, ez it may happen." Still this does not justify us in shutting our eyes to the many exceptions to this rule existing in English political life; and it does not warrant us in confounding political prudence with political dishonesty.

As far as Mr. Chamberlain is concerned, it is to be admitted that he is, in some quarters, intensely disliked and violently abused. But this fact proves nothing beyond the evidence it affords as to the existence of a spirit which seems to be as unfair as it is spiteful. There is a form of manly criticism to which every man in public life is liable. But there is also a form of unmanly criticism which Mr. Chamberlain has himself described as a mode of sniping. In this we are not likely to find much that will excite our admiration or enlighten our views. Nor are we likely to find in this manifest viciousness and bitter animosity much that will detract from our estimate of Mr. Chamberlain's qualities as a strong and progressive statesman. It is, it must be remembered, one thing to criticise fearlessly and vigorously: it is quite another thing to be actuated by a venomous and splenetic spirit.

In connection with the criticism of eminent public

men, it is easy to see that one of the characteristics of the English race is to censure unreservedly where censure is due, and to judge sometimes harshly in a rough-and-ready sort of way. But there is always a principle of fairness underlying such criticism, and bringing it into harmony with the robust manliness of the national character. There is frequently a lack of proper perspective, and an inadequate appreciation of the more elusive elements of character. Yet this disposition on the part of the average Englishman to hold the scales of justice evenly, and to judge all men during their lifetime by a common standard, is frequently softened by the intervention of death. The stern, unbending practical common sense which refuses to allow contemporary recognition to be influenced by sentimental considerations is not averse, when fairly convinced, to make ample posthumous reparation. Thus it happens that the estimate of those who play prominent and important parts in the drama of national life is generally postponed until the living reality has passed away, and the directness of personal contact and personal influence has ceased to exist. For some reasons it is well that the final verdict as to a statesman's character should be suspended until the searching and disenchanting processes of time have done their work. But there is also something to be said in favour of that nearness of view and closeness of touch which time must necessarily diminish, or perhaps destroy.

If it is true that contemporary criticism is apt to be too much influenced by nearness, it is no less true

that the indwelling life and spirit of the man, which nearness enables us to enter into and understand, are very apt to become, through the lapse of time, like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with stars dimly twinkling through their forms. The truth is that whilst the calm and unemotional view of the historian has much to commend it, it must not be forgotten that the estimate of a man's own time is quite as likely to be correct as the verdict of posterity. If the one has the advantage of the searching, analytical power which a retrospective study sometimes gives, the other certainly has the advantage of closeness of observation, and is not of necessity devoid of intellectual analysis and clearness of perception. Even under the most favourable conditions we only half understand the characters of those by whom we are surrounded. And this difficulty of perception is necessarily increased as the objects of our study recede from our view, and time and distance cause them to appear "pale, thin, and ineffectual." The ablest historians are those who most successfully reproduce the past, that we might look into it, scrutinise it, and feel the pulsations of its life and activity. But after all, this process of conjuring is never entirely successful.

From the most brilliant pages of history we get little more than a faint outline of an indwelling personality which is for the most part so hidden behind confused and conflicting phenomena as to be a poor substitute for the original. Indeed, there is a sense in which history, however well written, must always fail to be human history. The mere

fact of writing from a distance—and sometimes more with the object of dissecting a dead body than for the purpose of understanding a living character—is in itself a predisposing cause towards the obscuration and obliteration of much that is important and essential. An eminent historian has said that in the light of history, as it is usually written, "we have a leaf or two torn from the great book of human fate as it flutters in the storm-winds ever sweeping across the earth. We decipher them as best we can with purblind eyes, and endeavour to learn their mystery as we float along the abyss; but it is all confused babble—hieroglyphics of which the key is lost."

There must, of course, necessarily remain a sense in which history, written at a distance, will always constitute the final court of appeal. Yet this does not diminish the usefulness of a contemporaneous treatment of certain phases of character which act very powerfully on the circumstances and conditions of the time. Whatever advantage there may be in the recital of facts as the groundwork of history in its dealings with the past, it is important to remember that there can be no such thing as real human history if we fail to reproduce the indwelling forces of living men, as they obey their dominant impulses and the logic of their feelings. It is also a matter of importance that we should recognise the soundness of the view, first held by Thucydides, that politics very largely dominate the world.

In his earnest seriousness Thucydides saw beneath the agitated surface of life, and he gave due prominence to those political movements which act so

powerfully in determining the conditions of national destiny. What was true in the time of the Greek historian is equally true now. If we desire to understand the underlying forces of our national life we cannot do so with any degree of success if we omit the study of those conflicting political principles and those diverse political tendencies which are perpetually striving for the mastery. They are in a very real and important sense the great formative influences which will ultimately decide the measure of our success or failure. It may perhaps be that the term politics conveys to many minds nothing more than a mere hackneyed phrase, suggestive of an unseemly wrangle between the ins and the outs. But this is an erroneous view, dealing only with the superficial side of things, and neglecting those deeper and more important considerations which underlie our national life. Nor can we do justice to the more serious and thoughtful view of this subject if we overlook the necessity of carefully studying those who, from their political importance, very largely determine the aim and purpose of our national aspirations and tendencies.

In directing our attention to Mr. Chamberlain we are therefore simply endeavouring to examine fairly and intelligently one of the most important factors with which we have to deal. Occupying, as he does at the present time, a position of great prominence and power, the interesting and important question is, How far will his influence operate in shaping the future policy of the Unionist Party? Upon the answer to this question a great deal will depend. It

is fraught with greater consequences than a hasty consideration of the subject would lead us to think. That there are many eminent men in the Unionist Party who must necessarily exercise great influence on the future policy of the country is, of course, a self-evident truth, and needs no comment. But with all this it is perfectly clear that there exists in Mr. Chamberlain a distinctive quality which marks him as being, in some respects at least, the man of the future. Even now he is manifestly the strong man of a strong Government; and as time passes away he may become stronger than he is at present. At least this is a very probable contingency which it is not unreasonable to anticipate.

In making this reference to the consequences involved in Mr. Chamberlain's increasing power, it is perhaps well to emphasise as strongly as possible the debt which the country owes to Lord Salisbury for his splendid services and his wise administration. In his cautiousness and sagacity, no less than in his loyal devotion to the best interests of the Empire, our able Prime Minister has made for himself a name which will always shed its lustre on the pages of English history. And yet when we think of this reflective and experienced statesman, clothed with the splendour of well-earned greatness and renown, we somehow feel that we are near the evening of life, and looking at the glory of the setting sun. Whilst we hope that Lord Salisbury will for some time continue to be the guiding power in the Cabinet, it is a reasonable conjecture that the rumours as to his impending retirement are not entirely unfounded.

Sooner or later there must inevitably come a time when the glorious light of day will give place to the peaceful beauty of the evening, and the constantly recurring tragedy of Nature be reproduced in the sunset of our tried and trusted Premier.

In such an event it is not, however, likely that there would be any break in the continuity of Unionist policy. Under all the circumstances of the case the probabilities are that Mr. Balfour's reasonableness, urbanity, and intellectual flexibility will be duly recognised, to say nothing of other members of the Cabinet. But under any conditions that may arise Mr. Chamberlain's strong nature and increasing influence must be reckoned with. On this account, if for no other reason, it seems desirable to get as near as we can to the forces that underlie his character. We know perfectly well that when he has made up his mind he never dances round a subject, but strikes at it boldly and with great precision. His decision of mind and concentration of energy seem to act simultaneously; and the consequence is that he rarely fails in the attainment of his end. Surely with such a man in a responsible position it is perfectly consistent with common sense to ask ourselves what his increasing power really means.

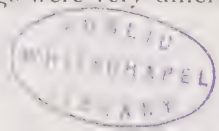
As we look forward to the possibilities of the future we cannot help seeing that there are many important questions looming in the distance. To some minds they are perhaps unwelcome subjects for contemplation, and may be productive of uneasiness and apprehension. But though they may be un-

welcome, they are nevertheless very real, and cannot be settled by political shuffling or supine indolence. They cannot be silenced by quackery, and they cannot be evaded by artful dodging. The only prudent course, therefore, is to grapple with them manfully and resolutely. And this means that we must have statesmen who possess strength and courage as well as ability. If we are to keep our place among the leading nations of the world there must be in our future policy no littleness, no vacillation, and no tinkering. Whatever our views may be as to the strength of our position, it is quite certain that we cannot look with complacent indifference at the attempts of our rivals to improve their positions in the great struggle for supremacy. New forces have come into existence, and the whole civilised world is alive with energy and progressive effort.

The truth is the world is being steadily acted upon by progressive forces which are gradually sweeping away the slenderly constructed barriers of an expediency no longer able to withstand the pressure of the rushing stream. We may not quite realise the meaning of this change, and we may not see with sufficient clearness that old problems are rising from their graves, and are being quickened into new life. We may cling fondly but absurdly to the idea that we can somehow rid ourselves of these ghosts which are fast becoming living realities. But it is sheer folly on our part to hug the delusion that we can allow things to drift in an indifferent and aimless manner.

Beneath the noisy surface of our busy life there

moves in silence an eternal steam of irresistible force which is sweeping onward in the direction of progress. As the modern world is constituted, there is no such thing as standing still. We must either be carried onward in our progressive course by the action of the silent stream to which I have referred, or we must be swept aside as unprogressive and useless. The stationariness which was once the dream of old-fashioned Conservatism is no longer practicable. It is incompatible with modern conditions, and as such must give way to those stronger forces which are more and more asserting themselves. It is not that the world has outgrown the usefulness of those static forces which tend to counteract rashness and impetuosity. As long as human nature remains what it is there will always be plenty of room for the exercise of that cautiousness which believes in making haste slowly. We must, however, be careful to distinguish between caution and immobility. What is really needed at the present time is not a policy of lightning speed, or one of simply standing still, but one which adapts itself wisely and carefully to the restless and progressive tendencies of the modern world. If we examine for a moment the civilisation of modern Europe, it will be easy to see how correct Guizot was when he described it as at once diversified, confused, and stormy. Within it are to be found all the principles of social organisation; powers temporal, powers spiritual, the theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic elements, all jumbled together, and struggling for the mastery. In the ancient world things were very different; and it was quite possible



for monarchy, theocracy, and democracy to become, each in its turn, absolutely supreme. In our day the conditions are changed; and no one of these forces is strong enough to take complete possession of society. There is no longer a general character of simplicity and unity running through civilisation, and impressing itself upon life and literature. There is greater rapidity of movement and wider range of thought and feeling. In a very real manner modern civilisation reflects the image of a world teeming with life and activity, and governed by the dominant idea of unrestricted development. Acting under the influence of a general progressive law aiming at the complete development of humanity, there appears to be a wonderful combination of forces and principles which, in its general effect, is a distinct and definite contribution to the cause of progress. To a great extent civilisation seems to have entered on a new career, and in place of circumscribed and narrow ideas as to what progress really means, the modern world seems to have set its mind on a process of development which shall be as diversified as it is abundant. Among other things the phenomenal growth and prosperity of the United States have made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of men. By this means the horizon of human possibilities has been considerably widened; and even the great world of the toiling millions has seen a new light, and felt the glow of new hopes and aspirations.

It is not that we, as a part of the modern world, are threatened with violently explosive forces which are likely to be ruinously destructive. Instead of

this, we seem to be passing through a period of transition in which the process of change is a gradual one, and in which there is no desire to disregard that principle of continuity which has been such an important influence in determining the course of English history. If we candidly examine the questions connected with our domestic legislation we find much to cause reflection, but nothing to cause alarm. In a very real sense the England of to-day still loves and cherishes the past. We have moved, in some respects, very rapidly and very successfully. But the movement has always been dominated by a determination never to break wholly with the past, and never to disregard its value. So true is this, that it is quite possible for every Englishman to regard with pride the history of his country, as he reads that thrilling story of gradual progress which enables him to exclaim:—

"I look, aside the mist has rolled,
The waster seems the builder too;
Upspringing from the ruined old,
I see the new.

'Twas but the ruin of the bad,
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had
Is living still."

As we understand progress there is no disposition to take dangerous leaps in the dark; nor is there any desire to plunge into a vortex of delirious excitement. The sound common sense which steadied our ancestors is with us still; and in our busy iron age we still retain the power of appreciating the last enchantments

of the Middle Ages as they appeal to us through the ineffable charm of our great Universities. There is necessarily a great difference between the hard, practical character of our commercial and industrial centres and the serene beauty of intellectual life at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as other Universities. Still we have never lost, and it is to be hoped we never shall lose, that affectionate regard for the institutions of the past which has always been one of the most marked of English characteristics.

And yet with all this, and with due recognition of certain qualities and habits of thought which operate so strongly in our favour, we cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that we live in an age when great and important issues tremble in the balance. A mere browsing and somnolent policy will not answer. A mere vapid and aimless policy is out of the question. What is wanted is a policy thoroughly charged with life and energy, and capable of treating, in a large and adequate manner, questions of far-reaching importance. The counteractive force generated by our national spirit of cautiousness is a great source of strength to us. But it is not enough. In addition to this we want statesmen who are in touch with the spirit of the age, and who, besides being alive to the needs of this great Empire, have the qualities of alertness and courage.

Under these circumstances it is not difficult to see that in our future policy there must be a necessary demand for a statesman of Mr. Chamberlain's recognised ability. It is, of course, true that a statesman's position is sometimes unexpectedly altered by an

unlooked-for change in popular opinion. But it is also true that there are some men so constituted as to be impervious to the passing influence of transitory conditions. As we look around us it requires no wonderful perceptive power to discover that weak men are blown here, there, and everywhere by every passing gust of wind; whereas strong men are frequently able to withstand, unmoved, the storm-winds that sometimes sweep across the earth. There is, indeed, a sense in which the velocity of the wind and the buffeting of the waves tend to strengthen and stimulate a really strong man. It is also true that in the wider sphere of national life, as in the narrower sphere of individual life, there is no escape from those conditions which render strength of character and tenacity of purpose of such inestimable value. In a country like ours, these qualities in a statesman are especially desirable. Coupled, as they are in Mr. Chamberlain's case, with quickness of perception and breadth of view, they insure us against the dangers of weakness and littleness. They lift us to a clear and comprehensive view of what the British Empire really is, and what its place is, or ought to be, among the nations of the world.

IV

GROWING POWER — CONTRAST BETWEEN LORD ROSEBERY AND MR. CHAMBERLAIN — MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND HIS BIRMINGHAM CONSTITUENTS — MODIFYING INFLUENCES OF CONSERVATISM.

AS a means of understanding Mr. Chamberlain's political success, we cannot dwell too forcibly on what is possible under a steady and persistent process of growth. In the course of his development there is much which renders us disinclined to believe in any destiny except the destiny of character. We seem, indeed, to be brought into close contact with certain forces working steadily and persistently towards the attainment of a desired end. There is, in the movement of his political growth, nothing which suggests the rushing Aufidus carrying away everything in the rapidity of its sudden flood. But we do find much which indicates the presence of inner influences and energies pushing forward with definiteness and precision of aim.

Under the circumstances connected with his development it would not be reasonable to expect

to find exceptionally high aspirations existing side by side with the pushing assertiveness necessary to political success. In Mr. Chamberlain's political education we must expect to find a preponderating influence of those forces which produce strength of nerve and an iron will. Without the action of these tendencies we could never have had the strong and self-reliant statesman who now wields so great an influence over the popular mind.

It is not that we have no strong statesmen among those whose lives are distinctly permeated by sweetness and light. Experience has frequently shown that the reverse of this is the case. It is, as a matter of fact, a common experience to find great strength of character concealed beneath the unobtrusiveness and gentleness of refinement and culture. Fortunately there are among us many instances in which this happy combination exists in a remarkable degree. Were it otherwise, there would be ample ground for alarm; and we would certainly be on the road to rapid deterioration and decay. When culture encourages enervation and emasculation it will be time enough to decry its value. But when it has, as experience proves, the contrary effect, we cannot too highly appreciate its delicate co-ordination of gentleness and strength, and its harmonious development of human nature. There are few things in this world more worthy of admiration than a well-balanced, finely equipped nature, in which reason and sentiment perform their duties with unerring accuracy, tempered by tactful consideration for the feelings of others. Should this delicate charm ever disappear

from our public life, we shall in reality have entered on a period of retrogression not pleasant to contemplate. These conditions are so well known and so self-evident that reference to them seems almost superfluous. Still it is as well to emphasise their existence, and dwell on their importance.

When we enter on a character such as Mr. Chamberlain's we, however, find ourselves in touch with forces which concern themselves primarily with the qualities of energy and strong concentration of purpose accompanied by a constant gladiatorial alertness and readiness. We do not feel ourselves in contact with a nature in which the idea of self-suppression and self-effacement occupies a prominent place. But instead of this, all ideas and motives seem to revolve round a common centre of self-consciousness, and in their action egoise a strong and striking individuality. We find much to interest us in the study of a strong character steadily pushing its way upwards, and impressing itself very distinctly on all with which it comes in contact. But we somehow feel that there is a deficiency with respect to those forces which quicken impulse and stir the imagination. It would be grossly unjust to say that there is in Mr. Chamberlain an entire absence of those higher and nobler aspirations which lift us above the little things of life. It is much nearer the truth to say that these more exalted conditions of thought and feeling are obscured by an overmastering impulse which relegates them to a secondary and subordinate position. There is in Mr. Chamberlain's life ample evidence as to the existence of high and generous

impulses in his nature. Nor is there the slightest reason to doubt that it is largely his conscience and his sincerity which make him so strong and clear. Still we are bound to admit that there are no signs of that refined sensibility and delicacy of feeling which we find in some of our eminent public men. As we follow him in the course of his development he seems to rise by sheer force of intellect and strength of will. He rises gradually and surely, but he never attempts to soar. In the contemplation of his wonderful growth and expansion we are refreshed and invigorated, but we do not experience the warmth of an enthusiasm that quickens our pulse.

Yet there is a sense in which Mr. Chamberlain's career illustrates in an especial manner the importance of that persistency of growth which sometimes accomplishes so much in the world. In this way it also demonstrates the futility of those vague and idle dreams in which luck and chance are considered sufficient to render success attainable through a process of easy drifting. To this misleading and pernicious view Mr. Chamberlain's life gives a flat contradiction. In his restless energy and in his steady development, he tramples with undisguised scorn all weak and puerile notions as to the conditions on which success depends. Under the searching light of clear, cold intellectual analysis Mr. Chamberlain easily separates the intrinsic from the extrinsic, and the essential from the unessential. He does not confuse issues which are distinct and independent of each other; and he never mistakes shadows for realities. Nor are his actions in any

way governed by a nervous diffidence which, in its dreaminess—

> "Seems as if it feared to wake
> The slumbers of the silent tides."

Instead of this reposeful and inactive quality, we find much in his character which stimulates our progressive energies and our masculinity of purpose. We are strengthened and refreshed by the pure, bracing air which surrounds a strong character; and under the pressure of such an influence, we become clearer and more definite in our ideas. Whether we agree with Mr. Chamberlain's views or not, it is impossible to study his character without realising that we are in contact with a certain indefinable force which stiffens and steadies us. There is nothing in the action of this force upon us that is likely to produce unqualified or gushing admiration. It does not appeal to the mind in this way, and in some respects it is devoid of those elements which most effectually kindle the spark of popular enthusiasm. Yet it is nevertheless a very real and very potent influence. To a very great extent Mr. Chamberlain's strength is derived from the fact that he is a well-balanced, shrewd, business-like statesman, in whose apparently unemotional policy comprehensiveness and definiteness are equally operative. If we miss in him the charm of personal magnetism which sometimes accompanies great intellectual power, we are compensated for the loss by a luminousness and a perspicuity which leave nothing to be desired.

In his deficiency as to magnetic quality, Mr. Chamberlain is unlike that eminent statesman who has recently made such laudable efforts to rescue the Liberal Party from its present demoralised and moribund condition. As is generally recognised, Lord Rosebery's influence and popularity rest very largely on the fascinating charm which gives to his political utterances a quality and flavour peculiarly their own. In the rapid movement of his generous impulses, and in the onward rush of his progressive ideas, Lord Rosebery sometimes generalises too hastily, and he sometimes loses himself in the superabundance of his many-sidedness. But he is always immeasurably above the average humdrum politician, and his thoughts and feelings are always clothed with a freshness and spontaneity that produce an immediate effect.

Even if we cannot always agree with his views, we cannot escape from the influence of a mysterious charm which draws and delights us. It may be that he is simply wasting his energies in attempting an impossible task, and it may be that the party he seeks to aid is hopelessly deaf to the appeals of a high and noble patriotism. Still the fact remains that a praiseworthy effort has been made. If the corpse refuses to be resuscitated it is not the fault of the statesman who was willing to undertake the task of revivification. The success or failure of Lord Rosebery's efforts do not, however, affect the interesting study of him as the foremost among living English statesmen in his strong personal magnetism, and in his strangely real, though elusive, charm. In a very

real sense there is an exhilarating freshness in whatever Lord Rosebery has to say. He does not, of course, reach the standard of Carlyle's hero, dwelling in solitude, loving men with inexpressible soft pity, and journeying upward to the stars. But he does succeed in lifting his hearers to elevated moods of lofty aspiration. When all has been said that can be said as to his indecision and his disinclination to carry his views into practical effect, it is still true that Lord Rosebery always succeeds in quickening those noble and generous impulses which are sometimes forgotten in the exciting contest between political parties.

The contrast between Mr. Chamberlain and himself is very striking. This is, however, no reason why we should hesitate, in a study of Mr. Chamberlain's character, to fittingly recognise the admirable qualities of his most distinguished rival. Indeed, the contrast seems to demand a frank and generous recognition, even though we are compelled to admit that Mr. Chamberlain's strength and courage are of higher and more enduring value than Lord Rosebery's efflorescent eloquence.

It is quite true that Mr. Chamberlain does not possess that oratorical power and that fine intellectual enthusiasm which are capable of lifting us to those higher conditions of thought and feeling—

> "Whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
> That they were born for immortality."

In this respect it would be absurd to claim that he possesses the ability to lift us to those mountain-tops,

where the soul dwells in solitude, as it contemplates the vastness of the immensities and the mystery of human life and human destiny.

And yet with respect to his attitude towards those conditions that quicken our appreciation of a worthy national ideal, there is nothing in his career which warrants us in doubting his earnestness and sincerity on this point. If he does not speak to us from those heights where never creeps a cloud, and if he does not appeal to us through the medium of highly refined culture and sweet persuasiveness, he at least brings home to us the importance of that growing power which is the essential basis of progress. As has been previously said, Mr Chamberlain has given, in his life, a striking illustration of the persistency of growth. And when we detach the impersonal from the personal we find this principle acting everywhere in the progressive instincts of the human race. When it centres itself (as in the present instance) in an especial degree in the life of an individual we realise its action and importance with additional clearness; and in this sense the character of this individual becomes a most attractive and useful study. By means of it we learn anew the important lesson that all life is pervaded by a principle of growth which is as real as it is mysterious. We also learn, in the light of such a character, that there is a process of growth which goes on steadily, in spite of the fluctuating conditions of ordinary human experience. As the process goes on the character gradually rises upwards, the mind expands, and the whole nature becomes more and more a living organic

growth, in which the vital forces continually increase in energy and power. There is no fretting or sputtering, and no laborious toiling in this process of development. By degrees, and without any visible mark of the tool upon them, these characters gradually lift themselves higher and higher, and in some instances they stand out conspicuously from among the crowd as living witnesses to the measure of human possibilities. Nor is it a matter of less importance that the development of such characters enables us to see with additional clearness the truth of that gradatory process which runs through human life.

"We hope, we resolve, we aspire, we pray,
And we think that we mount the air on wings,
Beyond the recall of sensual things,
While our feet still cling to the heavy clay.

Wings for the angels, but feet for men!
We may borrow the wings to find the way;
We may hope, and resolve, and aspire, and pray,
But our feet must rise, or we fall again.

Only in dreams is a ladder thrown
From the weary earth to the sapphire walls;
But the dreams depart, and the vision falls,
And the sleeper wakes on his pillow of stone.

Heav'n is not reached at a single bound;
But we build the ladder by which we rise,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round."

Whatever our abilities and opportunities may be, we cannot escape from the principle of gradual and persistent growth which these lines so well express. There is a gradual growth of character as truly as there is gradual growth of a tree. And the men who

most fully emphasise this fact, by the example of their lives, are very real benefactors to the human race. It is a matter of no consequence whether we agree with them or not in this or that particular respect. Whatever divergences of view there may be, it remains true that they are important and productive centres of progressive force and propulsive energy. They rouse us to a consciousness of what can be done. They quicken in us certain potential qualities which, but for their influence, might have remained inactive and undeveloped. They lift us, in a measure, above our ordinary selves, and they show us what human nature is capable of under conditions governed by perseverance and tenacity of purpose.

It is largely due to Mr. Chamberlain's manifestation of these qualities that he has such a strong hold upon the average Englishman. In a very real sense it is his possession of these qualities that render him so thoroughly representative of his Birmingham constituents. By these men the world is looked at from a clear-headed, practical point of view. There is nothing about them that is not thoroughly earnest and real. Life is for them a serious business, in which there is no room for frivolity or drowsiness. They know nothing of cultured ease and lazy dreaminess. But they thoroughly understand the difference between a weak man and a strong man, and they know that Mr. Chamberlain bears, in a conspicuous degree, the distinctive marks of the latter class. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chamberlain's representation in Parliament of West Birmingham is something much more than a merely nominal and perfunctory affair.

Instead of this, the whole matter is pervaded by a spirit of thoroughness and living reality which causes the relations between his constituents and himself to be as deeply rooted as they are genuine. From the point of view of his Birmingham supporters Mr. Chamberlain represents the qualities of strength, courage, acuteness, and manliness. And from this cause there springs a genuine admiration of qualities which appeal in an especial manner to men who are themselves strong, self-reliant, and wide awake. They are not unmindful of the fact that Mr. Chamberlain's views have been modified by time and circumstances. But they refuse to admit that this modification has changed the dominant quality of his ideas or that it has affected materially the general drift of his policy. It will be necessary to refer again to the action of this modifying process and its general effect on Mr. Chamberlain's views. But in the meantime it is well to bear in mind the importance of that unlimited confidence which manifests itself so fully and spontaneously where Mr. Chamberlain is best known. If his Birmingham followers trust him unreservedly they do so because they understand him, not because they are deceived by misleading appearances and imperfect knowledge. It is not a blind hero-worship, having no better foundation than sentimental gush and inflated unreality; it is a steadfast, unswerving consensus of opinion, produced by accurate knowledge and close observation. In a very real sense Mr. Chamberlain's relations to his constituents give a clear insight into the conditions underlying his position and influence. When we understand these

relations they enable us to separate our ideas from the instability and superficiality of popular opinion, and to rest them on the stability and thoroughness of intimate acquaintance and well-founded appreciation. We pass from the vagueness and indefiniteness of opinions formed at a distance to the clearness and definiteness of opinions formed under the advantages of personal contact. Under these circumstances Mr. Chamberlain's Birmingham supporters do not flounder in a quagmire of slippery uncertainty, nor do they fumble undecidedly in the expression of their views. On the contrary, they take their stand on the *terra firma* of experience, and give to their great representative a loyal support which nothing short of a miracle can destroy.

With respect to those modifying conditions to which I have referred, it must be admitted that their influence is too perceptible to be questioned. Nor can it be denied that under existing circumstances Mr. Chamberlain's views are necessarily acted on by his environment. But, while we recognise this, it is well to remember that there is nothing in the fusion of Conservatism and Liberal Unionism which is likely to arrest to any serious extent the progressive tendencies of Mr. Chamberlain's mind. That there has been modification, and that the modifying process is still in operation is quite true. It is, however, necessary to discriminate between modification and complete change. Unless we keep this distinction clearly in view we are sure to fall into a confusion of ideas which must necessarily obscure the real facts of the case. We are sure, in the absence of this

discriminative power, to miss the operation of that fine perceptive and analytical insight which enables us to separate the incidental from the essential. In a study of Mr. Chamberlain this desirable quality is especially necessary. Without it we are almost sure to generalise hastily and incorrectly, and to mistake a gradual adjustment to new conditions for a repudiation of former ideas. In the case of Mr. Chamberlain it is certain that a great many persons have fallen into this error. They have mistaken the seeming for the real, and they have not made sufficient allowance for the strength and constancy of certain qualities which are inseparable from the character of a really strong man. As a matter of fact, strong natures always possess a degree of pliancy which fits them to new conditions without altering the inherent force of their character. They possess a freshness or readiness which enables them to enter into new conditions and varying circumstances, but which at the same time does not disturb those fundamental qualities on which strength and constancy of purpose rest. Experience teaches us that "water bends and adapts itself to any channel," while "air folds and adapts itself to each new figure." These operations are constantly taking place in the world of Nature. Yet their action does not produce any change in the essential qualities of air and water. They remain the same in spite of their varying processes of adaptation. And the same is true of a really strong nature as it enters into new combinations and new forms of manifestation. Whatever may be the varying appearances of its diversified forms of activity, it will

always draw its inspiration from certain underlying forces which are steadily moving towards a definite and unchanging purpose. Nor must it be forgotten that it is quite possible for strong characters to combine the greatest possible patience with the most unwavering determination. They are always alive with alertness and energy, backed by a calm consciousness of strength. But they know perfectly well that success is very often imperilled by indiscreet precipitancy.

In addition to all this, it is also well to remember that it is by no means a disadvantage for a statesman possessing Mr. Chamberlain's qualities and tendencies to be brought under the influence of mellowing and restraining conditions. Besides bringing his views into more complete harmony with the principle of gradual evolution that underlies the history of his country, he is brought into more direct contact with the animating purpose of Conservatism as it exists to-day. It is not that, under these new conditions, Mr. Chamberlain is less progressive in his views, or less positive in his opinions. It is that he sees some things in a new light, and is wise enough to profit by his experience. Believing as thoroughly as he ever did in the indispensableness of liberty as an essential condition of progress, he has learned to estimate more accurately and justly those Conservative tendencies which exercise such an important influence on the drift of our national life. He is not now disposed to regard all Conservatives as political drones and sleepy obstructionists. This immaturity of judgment is, with Mr. Chamberlain, a thing of the

past. And it is a fortunate thing that it is so. While he still retains his original impulses, and his almost passionate love for freedom and unrestricted development, he sees more clearly than he did into the importance of those tendencies which move in the direction of caution and deliberation. From his present point of view, and in his maturer judgment, he realises that liberty does not necessarily mean progress, and that the principle of continuity running through English history is of supreme importance. There is, in the course of his political development, no hiatus, no sudden transformation, which would warrant us in accusing him of weakness, insincerity, or instability. If he has learned to form a clearer and truer estimate as to what Conservatism is, and what it means, he has done so by elevating and widening his liberal ideas, not by casting them aside as worthless and useless. He still remains the faithful representative of the indomitable spirit of English liberty, as well as the perfect embodiment of energy and self-reliance. But he combines with these qualities a sense of responsibility which tempers his judgment. He is as anxious as he ever was to accelerate the progressive movement of his country. He is as earnest as he ever was in stimulating and strengthening a feeling of manly independence. But with all this we find a new set of influences at work which have broadened and deepened his views. Although there has been no change in the forces underlying his character, these forces have nevertheless been acted upon to a very great extent by greater nearness to the highest sources of Conserva-

tive thought and feeling. There has been in operation a process of gradual permeation; not a process of transformation. There has been nothing which can be properly called conversion, but there has been much which may be properly called education. And herein lies the secret of Mr. Chamberlain's political success, and the cause of his steadily increasing power.

Having abandoned none of the views and principles which made the Liberal Party great in its pre-Liliputian days, Mr. Chamberlain is at the present time pre-eminently a statesman in whom liberal aspirations are supplemented and strengthened by careful observation, as well as by the restraining influence of his new surroundings. If the impetuous rush of Radicalism is less manifest than it was, there is abundant evidence of a strong, unwavering progressiveness which is all the more valuable because it is free from rashness and unwisdom. In his higher and wider conception of the conditions necessary to progress, he has wisely discerned that there is a sense in which liberty may become power cut into fragments, and therefore likely to lead to weakness rather than to strength. He may, in his maturer thought, realise a danger in the tendency towards commonplace opinion which democracy sometimes exhibits. He may even have remembered regretfully that the Athenian democracy, which was so glorious in its productions of philosophy, science and art, was really nothing more than an aristocracy resting on the ruins of one, much narrower, which had preceded it. All this is quite possible, and perhaps

probable. Yet we sadly misunderstand the movement of Mr. Chamberlain's characteristics and the drift of his tendencies if we suppose that these circumstances impede his growth as a strong, progressive statesman.

In reality the effect produced on Mr. Chamberlain by his closer contact with Conservatism has been merely to sober his views and give him greater discriminative power. In spite of appearances, the generous impulses of his early Radicalism still remain. They have simply been acted upon by a spirit of increasing cautiousness and a prudent regard for surrounding circumstances. There is no reason to believe that there has been any suppression or extinction of the feeling which prompted Mr. Chamberlain to say, at an earlier period of his career, "England is said to be the paradise of the rich; we have to take care that it is not suffered to become the purgatory of the poor." This is a fine sentiment, and it leads us to reflect upon those deep and important issues which affect in the most vital manner the stream and tendency of our national life. As we study the subject carefully we find nothing to warrant us in thinking that Mr. Chamberlain is less interested in the struggles and the disadvantages of poverty than he ever was. We do, however, discover very good reason for believing that he has passed from an impulsive to a reflective stage. If he seems to have lost the early glow of enthusiasm, he has certainly found the clear, calm judgment of mature thought. There is, in the movement of his ideas, less of the suddenness and brilliancy of

lightning, and more of the steadiness and clearness of light. In the present attitude of his mind there is nothing which strikes us as dazzling or startling. But there is a great deal which impresses us on account of its steady, illuminating power. This is one of the results consequent on the maturing process through which Mr. Chamberlain has passed, and is to some extent still passing through. In this light we can, with some degree of intelligence, understand the harmonious action of certain forces which seem superficially to conflict with each other.

Among other things he has, by means of this maturing process, approached more nearly to a perfect equilibrium, and sees more clearly than he did that there is a principle of compensation running through every sphere of human life. To some extent he has realised that an inevitable dualism bisects nature, and also underlies the nature and condition of man ; and that this law is as irreversible as it is general.

It is quite likely that Mr. Chamberlain has not consciously incorporated this dualistic principle into his political life. But he has certainly discovered, from his greater maturity and wider view, that it is quite as true in politics as in other spheres of human life, that for everything we gain we lose something ; and for everything we lose we gain something. As Emerson expresses it : " The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing than the varieties of condition tend to equalise themselves." In other words, there is always a tendency in circumstances towards a process of equalisation and

adjustment. The more we see of life the more we realise that there are some aspects in which the world looks like a multiplication table or a mathematical problem. Turn it how we will, it seems to balance itself. If we desire to attain success we cannot afford to do anything by halves. Nor is it possible to have a light without a shadow.

In the greater fulness of his political development Mr. Chamberlain seems to have grasped the importance of this underlying principle. Having outgrown his earlier tendency towards one-sidedness, he has learned to estimate more accurately and justly those Conservative tendencies which so wisely restrain eager spirits who would, if they could, reform the world in a hurry. He cannot be said to have given himself up to that charm of restful dreaminess

> "That gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes."

There is nothing in Mr. Chamberlain's temperament which is suggestive of "that serene and blessed mood" so beautifully described by Wordsworth. He does not seem to be so constituted as to be able to enter into an adequate appreciation of those whisperings through which the inner spirit suggests that there is no joy but calm. He is altogether too active and energetic to allow himself to be lulled into a condition of dreamy tranquillity. But, in the course of his political development, he has been wise enough to recognise the value of those conditions which have widened his views and chastened his judgment. In

this way his political insight has become clearer, and his opinions have become more wisely adjusted to the requirements of a far-seeing policy. The quick perception and restlessness of his earlier days have been modified and strengthened by a juster conception and a clearer appreciation of the responsibilities of statesmanship. If the world does not always seem to move as fast as he would like it to move, he shows no desire to push it on with the zeal of impetuous madness, regardless of consequences.

Strictly speaking, Mr. Chamberlain is just as progressive as he ever was. But there is this difference. During the earlier part of his political career he did not adequately understand the finer and more elusive elements of our national life. He did not sufficiently realise the meaning of those qualities of thought and feeling which render Conservatism so attractive to cultivated minds. Until he came under the direct influence of the higher consciousness of Conservatism he only vaguely and dimly apprehended the true significance of those forces which run through English history, operating cautiously, but nevertheless progressively. From his present point of view he sees more correctly as well as more clearly. The result of the steadily ripening process through which he has been passing has been to substitute maturity for immaturity. Had Mr. Chamberlain drifted into the company of mere iconoclastic Radicals instead of into the company of thoughtful and earnest Conservatives, he could never have been the eminent and popular statesman which he now is. Under any circumstances he would always have been a great power in

our political life. But had the trend of events been different, and had he been debarred from the advantages of Conservative influence, he could never have risen to his present position of power and popularity. He would almost certainly have become an intrepid free-lance, and an unsparing critic, wielding very considerable influence. But from the standpoint of Radical unripeness he could not possibly have inspired the confidence which he enjoys at the present time. Having gained in depth of insight and breadth of thought, he has risen to a higher and clearer appreciation of the true relations between the ideal and the real. The old contention, that life must always be adjusted on the lines of a compromise, has been borne in upon his mind. He has not found it necessary to undervalue the importance of ideal aims and aspirations. But he has discovered that there is much wisdom in the view which insists on accommodating what is ideal to what is practical and real. Under the influence of his new conditions he has drifted entirely away from those irrepressible Radicals who believe that whatever is, is wrong. He has, however, never cut adrift from those views and tendencies which gave to the Liberal Party its greatness in the past.

In his present position as a member of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet there has been no breaking away from the principles of a sane Liberalism. But although he remains unchanged in this respect, he has obviously been acted upon by a process of gradual assimilation which has remedied certain defects, and produced greater stability of character.

In proportion as there has been a decrease in the desire to generalise hastily and sweepingly, there has been an increase in the desire to see things in a clear light, and in their true relations to each other. Precipitancy of thought has been modified by soberness of view; and a process of attrition has caused some rough edges to disappear. In the ripening process through which he has passed, there has been no repudiation of former views, and no hothouse forcing to maturity. But steadily and almost imperceptibly a strong nature has been permeated by influences which have added completeness to strength. There has been no indication of a break in that principle of continuity which governs the life of every really strong man. The result actually produced by Mr. Chamberlain's connection with a Conservative Government has been a broadening and deepening of Liberal aims and aspirations, plus the steadying and restraining influences of Conservatism. The general tendency of his views, and the dominant quality of his characteristics, remain unchanged. But the impetuosity of political impulse has been brought more fully under control, and is more prudently regulated and directed. This is really the pith of the matter. The actual result of the political fusion, in which Mr. Chamberlain has played such an important part, has simply been to quicken, in his case, those strong qualities which, by their expansion, have materially widened the sphere of his power and usefulness. He shows no signs of having lost his faith in the possibilities of an enlightened democracy. But he does show many signs of having passed

through an educational process which has been of immense advantage to him as a means of success, as well as a source from which he has derived maturity of thought and a more perfectly balanced judgment.

V

GENERAL REVIEW OF THE SUBJECT—IMPERIAL UNITY—THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE—THE EVANESCENT AND THE ENDURING.

SHOULD the preceding estimate and analysis of Mr. Chamberlain's political character be even partially correct, we are fully warranted in predicting for him a continuance of those strong qualities and that progressive adaptiveness which have made him what he is. There is nothing whatever in the plenitude of his present popularity likely to impede that process of development which has stamped itself so plainly on his past. Nor is it probable that in his future policy he will display less sagacity or less comprehensiveness than he does at present. It is indeed almost certain that his ideas will continue to expand, and his aims be steadily directed towards the higher and more important interests of the Empire.

As an illustration bearing on this point, and as an indication of his comprehensive view as to what the British Empire really means, it is only necessary to read his speech delivered not long ago at the

Guildhall. Among other things, he said on this occasion—

"We know now that the honour and the interests of the Empire are recognised as not in the care of this country alone. Shoulder to shoulder, all for each and each for all, we stand united before the world, and our children have shown that they are not unwilling to share with us the obligations as well as the dignity of our Empire (cheers). It is a last step towards its consolidation, the value of which cannot be over-estimated. It has been the aspiration of our ancestors; it has been striven for by patriotic statesmen of all parties, and now it is within measure of practicable accomplishment. It is fraught with consequences incalculable in the coming years. These new nations are rising like stars above the horizon, and we hope and believe that they will run their orbits in harmony with our own (cheers). Do we realise this great conception? Do we see that it involves us in new possibilities? Can we project our imagination into the future and think of what it may mean to our descendants? Can we hold for ourselves, and can we transmit to our descendants, this great inheritance of a United Empire? I do not envy the place in history of any statesman who at the present time, when the War is coming inevitably to its appointed end (cheers), would be willing to ignore the opinions of these allies of our blood, who would be ready to compromise the issue for which they as well as we have fought, who would be prepared to patch up some sort of a peace, and to throw away in negotiations what we have gained in arms (cheers). It is easy—it is right to appeal to the humanity, the generosity, and the magnanimity of the British people, but I notice that these appeals are loudest in the mouths of those who have accused the British people of cruelty and barbarism (cheers). We are not vindictive, we are not accustomed to bear malice, and our enemies of yesterday, if they surrender to-day, will be welcomed to-morrow as friends (cheers). The danger is of a different kind. We have to take care lest our sensibility should run away with our sense (hear, hear).

Disloyalty Does Not Pay.

The Government has been accused of a desire of revenge; it has been alleged that we are pursuing a policy of extermination. What shadow of a shade of foundation is there for such an imputation? It is true we have said that certain

men, military and civil leaders, who have been the cause of the prolongation of this War, shall not return to the country of which they have been the greatest enemies (cheers). To allow them these irreconcileables, who have openly boasted of their intention of sweeping the English from South Africa from sea to sea, and even within the last few weeks, through their organs, have expressed their hopes that they will have another opportunity of carrying out their intention—to dispense with their continuance in the country is not a vindictive punishment, it is a measure of self-preservation (cheers). We do not threaten their lives, we do not even touch their property, but we do not desire their further company (cheers and laughter). And, my Lord Mayor, in like manner, impunity to treason is not humanity, it is cruelty—cruelty to those who have deserved best of us; to those Loyalists whose sufferings and losses have been great indeed; to those of the Dutch who have stood true to their allegiance, even to those Boers who in thousands at the present time, recognising the futility of the struggle, are aiding us to put an end to it. What would be the position of all these men if, in deference to a totally mistaken view of what humanity demanded of us, we were to place those who wantonly provoked this War, and who are now protracting it uselessly and greatly to the injury of their country—if we were to put them on an equal or even on a better footing? We have to show in common justice to those who have stood by us that disloyalty does not always pay (cheers). For the security of those who have been true we have to compel these men to recognise that they have been defeated, and to take away from them even the barest possibility that they may make another attempt. To do otherwise would be to disappoint the expectations of the nation. It would be to lose the confidence of our kinsfolk, to betray those who have trusted in us, and to invite the contempt of those foreign countries whose affection it seems impossible for us to gain, but whose respect, at any rate, we are able to secure (cheers and laughter).

The Desire for Peace.

I say once more, this people is not ungenerous to its foes. I believe at this time its earnest desire is for an honourable peace. His Majesty's Government share that desire. We earnestly long for peace, and we intend it; but so long as we continue to have the confidence of our countrymen, and so far as in us lies, we shall see that this peace, when it comes, is a peace that shall endure, a peace that will give us the

objects for which we have sacrificed so much, a peace that will be welcomed by all of those who have shared that sacrifice with us. When that peace comes, I, for one, have confidence in the future. I do not believe the pessimistic anticipations of those who seem never to have a proper confidence in the capacity of their own countrymen. I believe, on the contrary, we shall show to the world in a period of time, which is a mere moment in the history of a nation, South Africa as strong, as prosperous, and as free as any other part of his Majesty's dominions (loud cheers). My Lord Mayor, it is in the belief that this policy which I have indicated to-day has the full approval of the Corporation and the citizens of London that I accept with the deepest gratitude the Address which you have been kind enough to present to me (loud cheers)."

In the enunciation of these views Mr. Chamberlain adopts his usual clearness and directness of expression. There is no room for ambiguity or misunderstanding, and there is no attempted evasion of questions which demand intelligent and adequate treatment.

In a spirit of sober forecast, accompanied by glowing patriotic inspiration, he placed himself definitely and unreservedly on the side of that strong, but wisely adjusted, policy which has been his aim ever since he became Colonial Minister.

In this connection it is an advantage to keep before our minds the appreciative remarks of Mr. Balfour on the same occasion:—

"It is right," said Mr. Balfour, "that London, the City of London, and the Lord Mayor of London should take the lead in a movement which, if we look at it critically, is a recognition, as my friend Mr. Chamberlain has just said, of a principle as well as of a man (cheers). A principle is common property, not the property of the Government alone nor of the Party to whom the Government belongs, but, I believe, of the great majority of the citizens of the United Kingdom, to whatever Party they belong (cheers). But that principle is embodied for us this afternoon in the personality of a

single statesman, and in my opinion that embodiment is right (loud cheers). It is not that Mr. Chamberlain holds principles different from, or in advance of, his colleagues in the Government, his Party, or the community at large. It is that it has fallen to his lot to carry out those principles in a manner which will produce for him, as I think, a position on the roll of statesmen of this country second to none (cheers). Undying fame is the product of genius and of opportunity. We have had genius and opportunity. One without the other would produce but imperfect results. It is the happy combination of the two to which we owe it that, in the space of the administration of one Colonial Secretary, we have already seen the Commonwealth of Australia produced, brought into being, and that marvellous ebullition of Imperial feeling which has shown itself in every quarter of the Empire (cheers). It is no mere accident that these two things have happened during Mr. Chamberlain's tenure of the Colonial Office. It is due not merely to the fact that, in the progress of events, great difficulties and great crises have had to be met. It is due to the fact that when they had to be met there was a man at the head of that office who knew how to meet them (cheers), and I believe that the more you consult Colonial opinion, the more will it be brought home to the minds of every one of you that in these outlying but most important portions of our Empire, it is to my right hon. friend that they look as the man who, above all others, has made the British Empire a reality to the imagination (cheers), not only to those who live in these islands, but to every subject of his Majesty the King (cheers). It is my right hon. friend's good fortune, as I have said, to be the Colonial Minister when the Australian Commonwealth was called into being, and to be the Colonial Minister when every self-governing Colony vied with every other in coming to the aid of the Mother Country in a common cause (cheers). There is yet a third triumph which I firmly believe is reserved to him during his present tenure of office—it is that of the pacification of South Africa (loud cheers). He has been the target of unscrupulous attack, the victim of sleepless calumny through all these years in which the South African trouble has been occupying our attention; but I think it will yet be given to him to prove, not merely to his fellow-countrymen, but to all mankind, that the Minister in whose term of power the South African War broke out is also the Minister in whose term of office that war was brought to a triumphant end, and, what is far greater and far more important, the Minister who laid the deep and solid foundation of a free and contented British Colony in

those vast areas where the embers of war still linger (cheers). I am sure that, in the great task which the Government in general and my right hon. friend in particular have before them with regard to this settlement, we shall have the sympathy and the co-operation not merely of every man and woman whom I am now addressing, not merely of the Party to which probably most of us belong, but to the whole English-speaking race in every part of the world (cheers). All alike are enamoured of freedom; all are pledged to those institutions which have their origin in English freedom; all alike are determined that the war, once ended, shall never break out again; and, guided by those two principles, all alike will assist my right hon. friend in basing on a durable peace a not less durable freedom, and will join in congratulating him upon this the last great triumph of his Colonial policy (prolonged cheers).

With his usual clearness of mind and generousness of impulse Mr. Balfour has, in these well-chosen words, contributed very materially towards an adequate appreciation of Mr. Chamberlain's qualities as a statesman. When he emphasised the fact that "undying fame is the product of genius and opportunity" he seems to have caught and crystallised the spirit of Mr. Chamberlain's political growth. It is not likely that Mr. Balfour meant in this case to convey, in his use of the word genius, the idea of exalted intellectual power, capable of acting independently of tuition or training. What he obviously meant to convey was the idea of remarkable endowment and aptitude in a special direction, accompanied by persistency of purpose and a quick perception of the value of opportunity. This is the real secret of Mr. Chamberlain's political success; and it is a manifestation of political genius worthy of admiration.

We may look in vain, in the case of Mr. Chamberlain, for any evidence of that superabundant intel-

lectual power which sometimes startles us by its brilliancy and dazzling splendour. But we do not look in vain for a certain degree of originality and uniqueness, rendering it impossible for him to be lost in the crowd. If we do not find in him anything suggestive of Titanic intellectual strength, we do find much that is suggestive of the movement of those inward forces which pulsate with life and energy in the development of a strong character.

So truly is this harmonious action of forces manifested in Mr. Chamberlain's political career that we have in it a well defined instance of that co-ordination of individuality and development which John Stuart Mill so strongly advocated as the only reliable basis of human improvement. There has been, in the course of Mr. Chamberlain's development, an almost entire avoidance of the wearing away of those distinctive qualities which underlie his strong personality. The time has been when Mr. Chamberlain was almost as rebellious against the despotism of custom as Mill was. But having learned the value of that counterpoise derivable from the influence of those who occupy the higher eminences of thought, he has strengthened the qualities of his own individuality by allowing them to grow healthily and steadily toward their period of maturity. Without ever having lost sight of the importance of what Mill calls "the Sovereign Many," Mr. Chamberlain has wisely recognised that the initiation of all wise or noble things must in the first instance come from individuals exceptionally gifted in special directions. By this means he seems to have discovered the

happy medium between that sort of hero-worship which applauds the strong man for forcibly seizing the reins of power without regard to the wishes of the many, and that well-directed strength which never loses sight of the greatest good of the greatest number. In this way Mr. Chamberlain's tendencies have always been democratic in the highest and best sense. It has not been his aim to reduce the many to a dead level of flatness and uninteresting mediocrity. Nor has he ever shown a desire to see humanity moving smoothly and sluggishly, like a canal between its banks, instead of like a strong, impetuous river rushing onward in its journey to the sea. It has, however, been his aim to encourage a belief in that evolutionary hypothesis which is gradually widening our views, and is also lifting us to a higher and larger conception of the possibilities of the future. The essential and fundamental fact that progress is a process of gradual growth, not a process of hurried manufacture, has never been lost sight of by him. If at times he appears to have exhibited undue haste, his wider experience has gradually corrected his views and restored his equilibrium of thought.

It cannot be denied that Mr. Chamberlain is clearly of the opinion that it is better to wear out than to rust out. Nor can we fail to see that he is to some extent a believer in the transatlantic spirit of "Hustle and Bustle." It does not require very keen observation to perceive that his policy is alive with strenuousness and energy. He evidently believes in speeding up our national apparatus, and in

keeping ourselves well to the front in every respect. But he does not quite endorse the American ideal of rushing everything. At the same time he is quite aware that whilst Americans are inclined to go too fast, Englishmen are inclined to go too slowly. And it is precisely because he is conscious of this national defect that he endeavours to quicken our energies and increase our driving power. As an observant statesman Mr. Chamberlain is quite aware of the importance of the struggle for the survival of the fittest which is constantly going on between nations. There is in this struggle none of the sound and fury or the shock and concussion pertaining to war. But it is, nevertheless, a very real and very important struggle. It is also one which affects us in a most vital and far-reaching manner. In our position as a great and growing Empire we cannot afford to be like a huge and drowsy giant who sits with folded arms, while our nimble-witted rivals take advantage of our sleepy indifference. All this Mr. Chamberlain seems perfectly to understand. And in his energetic policy he seeks to impress upon us the importance of the issues involved.

Because he sees clearly, and because he rightly understands the signs of the times, Mr. Chamberlain sees that modern civilisation is, in an especial sense, making for the education of the race. And in this educational process there is an inevitable tendency towards the gradual weeding out of those who are not properly equipped for the struggle. The more we see of this iron age in which we live the more fully do we realise that there is no room for Utopian dreams,

and no chance for those who are deficient in strength and activity. It is as certain as anything can be that, in the great industrial and commercial struggle between nations, one of the essential conditions of success consists in abundant energy and constant alertness. If it is true, as has been said, that the American has no repose, it is equally true that there is a tendency on the part of Englishmen to have too much repose. What is an advantage in art is a disadvantage in business ; and the charm of repose which is becoming in the one is unbecoming in the other. There may be a danger in the constant high pressure of the American view of life ; and it is quite possible that their ideas as to the science of success are founded on an erroneous conception of the necessities of human nature. Still there is much in the ceaseless activity of our American cousins which we would do well to imitate ; and there is much in the example of their splendid success which tends to confirm the wisdom of Mr. Chamberlain's advocacy of a bold and energetic policy. As we survey the vast field which lies before us, and as we take a retrospective glance at the sequence of events which have led us to our present position of eminence and greatness, we seem to realise how profoundly true are the words of the late Professor Drummond : "As there is a force pushing cell to cell, or a cell onwards alone through life, so precisely, in the course of nations, God is behind all." Surely we can, without any unbecoming egotism, feel that there is an especially deep significance in these words when applied to our position as a great and progressive nation. Notwithstanding our

periods of darkness and our seasons of depression, there is, after all, something very real in that steady upward tendency which amply justifies us in being proud of the fact that we are Englishmen. The question is, shall we continue to keep bravely and steadily before our minds all that our responsibilities and our opportunities imply? Shall we agree with Mr. Chamberlain in his comprehensiveness of view and his energy of purpose? Shall we follow him in his almost poetic inspiration, as he pictures our Colonies rising like stars above the horizon, and moving in their orbits harmoniously with our own? There was a time when the idea of Imperial Federation seemed a vain and idle dream. But under the influence of circumstances and the guidance of wise statesmanship, the dream is fast becoming an accomplished fact. Already these stars are shining brightly above the horizon; and as they turn steadily towards us in their constancy, a new impulse has been imparted to our national life, and the idea of Empire has become larger and wider than it was before.

From Mr. Chamberlain's point of view the Anglo-Saxon race has before it a future of great and boundless possibilities. He does not in the least underestimate the importance of other races. But he does believe most thoroughly in the noble work which the Anglo-Saxon race has before it. He also notes, as an observant statesman, that general drift of sentiment which is gradually operating in obedience to a principle which may be described as a law of national gravitation. By this means the Anglo-Saxon race is being steadily solidified, and brought into a condition

of completeness as a harmonious whole. As a firm believer in the destiny of this race, his habit of thought and his attitude of mind are telescopic rather than microscopic. He does not waste his time by magnifying little things out of their true proportion. But he does endeavour to see clearly at a distance, and to understand the operation of those laws which govern the fluctuating conditions of national prosperity and decay. He evidently considers that there can be no sound policy where the guiding principles are of a fragmentary and disjointed character. There must be actual unity of interest, and a real bond of union based on comprehensive conditions. In other words, the foundation of wise policy must be as broad as it is deep, and must not be liable to those infractions and interruptions which narrowness and weakness are sure to produce. Looking at all political questions from the standpoint of his energetic common sense, Mr. Chamberlain evidently believes that there can be no safety in a policy which is devoid of clearness and definiteness, and is at the same time hampered by round-aboutness and procrastination.

It seems, in fact, to be contrary to his nature to indulge in that form of political laziness which is willing to let things drift and take care of themselves. Nor can we, by any stretch of imagination, think of him as giving way to that feeling of enervation and lassitude which causes the energies to suspend their activity, and

> "With half-shut eyes ever to seem
> Falling asleep in a half-dream."

For him there exists no charm or attraction in easy-going optimism. Nor does he believe in a state of negativeness which is almost as unproductive as suspended animation. Instead of this he is, under all circumstances, the very embodiment of alertness, activity, and energy. He appears to be entirely free from the weakening effects of intellectual nervousness and indecision; and he apparently enjoys a great advantage in the fact that his ideas do not percolate slowly through sluggish and obstructive media. As a consequence of his possessing these qualities he sometimes exhibits a quickness of movement and a rapidity of action which are apt to startle those who are accustomed to the slower and more cautious methods of diplomacy. Yet this alertness and directness are the very qualities that are most urgently needed at the present time.

A merely cursory glance ought to be sufficient to show us that we are living in an age when change is written everywhere. And, as a consequence of these conditions, there is an imperative demand for statesmen who are alive to the necessities of the time, and who are inspired by a strong and vigorous faith in the possibilities of the nation. Under the present increasing keenness of national rivalry and competition this inspiration seems to be especially needful. In a measure it is the animating force on which we must primarily depend; it is the indwelling spirit which is necessary to a proper manifestation of life and energy. It is, in a very real sense, the underlying principle of a large and comprehensive patriotism commensurate

with the vastness and greatness of the British Empire. Nor is this patriotic sentiment a mere bumptious spirit produced by an exaggerated form of insular pride. On the contrary, it may be correctly described as a growing consciousness of Empire, aiming at healthy comprehensiveness of policy and the advantages of Imperial unification. And in the development and expansion of this idea Mr. Chamberlain is certainly the most active and prominent of our statesmen.

Looking at the growth of the British Empire from a broad and progressive point of view, he steadily directs his Colonial policy towards the attainment of his desired end. He never wavers in his faith, and he never relaxes his energy. If we confine our estimate of his position as a statesman to this particular phase of his public life, it will hardly be denied that his claim to greatness rests on a very substantial and very enduring foundation.

If, however, we go beyond this, and attempt to get at the secret of his success and power, we shall certainly find that the result is mainly due to the joint action of inherent force and intellectual alertness. In his growth and development we have a forcible illustration of what is possible where quickness of perception is combined with singleness of aim and resoluteness of purpose. If we fail to discover in the study of his character any marked evidence of that calm reflectiveness which generally accompanies intellectual strength, we do find a superabundance of that penetrative quality which comes from observation rather than from study. There

seems to be in Mr. Chamberlain an exceptional quickness of insight as to his perceptual surroundings; and by means of this he regulates with consummate skill his assertiveness and his self-reliance. He has carefully read the book of the world, and has apparently gained a knowledge of human nature which has been of very great advantage to him. Under different conditions he might have been like many other able men in whom excessive study has sometimes deprived their minds of elasticity and vigour. But under the circumstances and conditions of his development his essential qualities have been cultivated and strengthened; and a steadily progressive force has produced a strong character that will leave an indelible impression on the pages of English history.

In the silent and solemn march of events the time must come when his power and influence will cease to exist. All things human necessarily come to an end; and even the most striking personality sooner or later fades away like a slowly departing dream.

> "Everything that grows
> Holds in perfection but a little moment,
> And this huge state presenteth naught but shows
> Whereon the stars in silent influence comment."

And yet we miss the higher meaning of human history if we fail to perceive that we live in deeds, not in years. We misunderstand the deep significance of life if we do not realise that, in the midst of all the fluctuations and changes of time, there will always remain that indestructible combination of qualities which we call character.

There is a sense in which it is quite true that in this busy world of ours the mighty loom of Time is for ever weaving the garment of Eternity. The perpetual process of change which we see going on around us is an essential condition of life, as well as a significant sign of the transitoriness of all things. Yet the silent stream of human character moves steadily and resistlessly on through unending ages.

Above and beyond the din and discord of life, and above and beyond the evanescent phenomena of our daily experience, there will always remain the supreme importance of those conditions which invest the idea of individual responsibility with such real and profound meaning. "Every one is the son of his own works," said Cervantes. And the indestructibility of this everlasting sequence between cause and effect is quite as real when applied to those who reach the heights of success as it is when applied to those who fail in the battle of life. In the wonderful drama of human success and failure we invariably find that really strong men — combining ability with strength — are those who dominate their age, and leave behind them a deep and lasting impression on the history of their country. Nor is it less true that in the wide sphere of public life, as in the narrow sphere of private life, the qualities of strength, clearness, and definiteness always make themselves felt, and exercise a wide and far-reaching influence. As tributary streams to the majestic river of our national life, these influences are of great and enduring importance.

VI

CONCLUDING REMARKS

OWING to the cessation of hostilities in South Africa since the preceding pages were written it is perhaps well to refer to the new sphere of responsibility which this circumstance imposes upon Mr. Chamberlain as Secretary of State for the Colonies. With unspeakable joy we welcome the termination of a weary and wasting war which was forced upon us During its continuance we passed through much sorrow, and we had some unwelcome experiences. Still, taking the result as a whole, the advantages have considerably outweighed the disadvantages, and the lessons we have learned are sure to have a salutary effect. Among the advantages derived from this war the most important result is that clearly defined expression of union between the Colonies and the Mother Country which emerges from the din of conflict; and like a beautiful rainbow spans the heavens after the storm. Never in the annals of history has there been a more splendid instance of loyal spontaneity and heroic responsiveness. And

it cannot be overestimated in its influence and importance.

In addition to these considerations it has also been conclusively shown that even under discouragement and misrepresentation there has never been the slightest wavering or hesitation on the part of the nation. Under the depression of unexpected reverses as well as under the elation of well-earned victories, we have always been self-possessed, self-reliant, and calm. With the exception of a few pro-Boers, there has been no restlessness, no shuffling, and no thought of turning back. It has done us no harm to have these national qualities of fortitude and heroism demonstrated anew. And it certainly is an encouragement to feel that we are still dominated by a strong and steady stream of healthy and vigorous national feeling. As Hercules, according to Ruskin, was no dead hero, to be remembered only as a victor over monsters of the past, but as the perpetual type and mirror of heroism, so the ideal of our national heroic spirit is one that contains a symbolic meaning which is suggestive of something high, noble, and enduring.

With respect to this deeply-rooted and unwavering national sentiment, it is not the least of Mr. Chamberlain's claims to distinction that he has always understood the importance of this strong national feeling. He never attempted to underestimate the difficulties with which we had to contend. But he always recognised the robustness and the determination of his countrymen. At all times and under all circumstances he emphasised the fact that Englishmen are not easily discouraged, and do not give way to half-

heartedness and nervelessness. He has always recognised and appreciated, among our national characteristics, the old Roman spirit of stern resolve and calm endurance. Nor can it be doubted that the accuracy of this estimate is to a great extent the cause of his present power and popularity. He seems to have seen clearly where others have allowed themselves to be confused by the mists of uncertainty and indecision.

Now that the end has come, and the horrors of war have been supplanted by the blessings of peace, there has been opened up a new avenue of possibilities for the exercise of his statesmanship. In this direction there is ample room for the application of a wise and far-seeing policy. And fortunately there is good reason for believing that such a policy will be pursued.

If strength of character, breadth of view, and clearness of perception mean anything, it may be accepted as a foregone conclusion that our future policy in South Africa will be strong, wise, and humane. As an initial advantage it counts for much that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner are both able men who are especially well fitted to the task before them. There is also much encouragement to be derived from the manner in which the Boers have shown their readiness to submit to their new conditions as British subjects. A great deal of this is doubtless due to the tact with which the terms of peace were concluded. But this result is also very largely due to the firm and dignified attitude of the Government. Had there been any sign of weakness or indecision on the part

of our Government, the war would almost certainly have been prolonged for an indefinite period. Happily these indications of weakness have not been apparent; and the consequence is that we have succeeded in commanding the respect of those who proved themselves brave and stubborn as enemies. In the terms of surrender the Boers realise perfectly well that we can be generous as well as just. They clearly understand the meaning of a policy which rests on consciousness of strength, and is at the same time capable of being generous to a conquered foe. The combination of these qualities reveals to them the true greatness of England, and they respect us accordingly. The result would, however, be very different were they less aware of our strength and tenacity of purpose. And it is essential to our future in South Africa that this consciousness of British power and British determination should permeate the entire population. By all means let all causes of friction be removed as speedily as possible. Let us also continue to be generous in our treatment of our late enemies. But let us remember that without strength, firmness, and consistency there can be no real progress made in the matter of readjustment and reconstruction. The storm is past, but it has left behind it ruin and desolation. Many of our loyal subjects have been ruined; and many such instances demand our just and generous recognition. All such cases will undoubtedly be treated liberally by the Government. But they indicate the complexity of the problem which lies before us; and they point to the fact that what is required is a broad and comprehensive policy

worthy of the aims and aspirations of the British Empire. There must be no littleness, no narrowness, and no Procrustean tendencies. But there must be, above all things, the perpetual evidence of a strong power pervading all things, yet possessing, like Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face," a look of grand beneficence that seems to embrace the world.

That Mr. Chamberlain will, in his South African policy, endeavour to realise this ideal seems reasonably certain. It may, indeed, be said that his attitude can be confidently predicted. He is not at all likely to lose sight of the importance of lib[illegible]l and conciliatory measures. He would be untrue to his early aspirations did he fail in this direction. But it is quite certain that he will not allow liberality of view to degenerate into suicidal weakness.

"Never again" has been said more than once with reference to this recently terminated South African war. And it is most improbable that Mr. Chamberlain would support any policy which did not aim at rendering this sentiment a living and enduring reality. He will certainly advocate a policy which shall be liberal in spirit, though wise in its adjustment to the new order of things. Generous in its intentions, and comprehensive in its scope, it will also be a policy aiming at permanence, certainty, and stability. He will endeavour, with Lord Milner's able co-operation, to introduce a new era in South Africa; and he is sure to throw the full force of his energy and ability into his work. Whether he will succeed or not remains to be seen. Still it can safely be predicted that he will, as a member of the Cabinet, do his best

to render the blessings of peace more and more pronounced. He will do all in his power to encourage the advantages of civilization as they produce their natural consequences in widening and strengthening the boundaries of the British Empire.

It is not an idle dream that Briton and Boer may yet work together harmoniously in the development of a peaceful and prosperous South Africa. But this is only possible under the ægis of a strong Government, and under the guidance of wise statesmanship, accompanied by firmness and unwavering fixity of purpose.

At the present time there are many indications that our generous treatment of the Boers has been productive of results that even the most sanguine did not anticipate. In this respect appearances are most promising. Yet it is not wise to ignore difficulties that may yet arise. Without questioning in the least the good faith of those who have struggled so bravely, it is important to remember that it will be necessary for some time to distinguish in South Africa between the seeming and the real, and to keep clearly in view those silent forces which really determine the success or failure of all attempts to reconcile a conquered race to its altered conditions. In this connection a sound policy will direct its attention primarily to enduring principles, and secondarily to evanescent appearances which are sometimes misleading. It is the distinctive quality of able statesmanship that it looks at important questions in a large and comprehensive manner, aiming at enduring principles rather than the shifti-

ness of expediency. Under existing circumstances it is therefore most fortunate that we have at the Colonial Office a statesman who is not a believer in weakness and vacillation, and who combines alertness of mind and breadth of view with unusual clearness of perception. It may suit political opponents and pessimistic alarmists to disparage his strong progressive policy. But it will hardly be denied by dispassionate observers that, in the robustness and definiteness of his attitude, there has been generated a sphere of influence which has quickened, widened, and strengthened the spirit of our national ideal. If he is in some respects lacking in completeness and harmonious proportion, he has at least drawn his political inspiration from those sources of strength and progressive power which are inseparable from our history as a nation.

Properly understood, the British Empire means something infinitely more than a mere aggregation of parts, held together by the application of extraneous force. If it means anything, and if it is to attain the possible grandeur of its destiny, it must become more and more a great universal and all-embracing force, spreading over an almost boundless expanse of territory, and diffusing the advantages of liberty, justice, and unrestricted development. In that case the sun that never sets on the greatest Empire of the world will in an especial sense perpetually symbolise the blessings of enlightenment, progress, and good government as consequences of British rule.

That Mr. Chamberlain is conscious of these limit-

less possibilities we have no reason to doubt. On the contrary there seems to be very good reason for believing that his policy is animated by a comprehensive grasp of the wide progressiveness necessary to our higher interests and our permanent national greatness. Looking at our duties and responsibilities from a strong Imperial point of view, he seems to clearly understand that the greatness of Empire depends primarily on the guiding power of moral force, accompanied by consciousness of strength and definiteness of aim. In the general drift of his policy there is nothing which really conflicts with enlightened Liberalism and the demands of progress wisely adjusted to conditions of stability and gradual development. It is an error of judgment to dwell exclusively on Mr. Chamberlain's self-assertive and self-reliant spirit, and overlook the co-ordination, produced by his equilibrium of temperament, between masculinity of thought, progressiveness of aim, and strength of patriotic aspiration.

In all strong characters there must necessarily be certain qualities which will always thrust themselves into prominence. Yet it is important to remember that no estimate of character can be even approximately correct if it does not aim at synthesis quite as much as at analysis. In any attempt to get at the animating purpose of a strong and interesting personality it is not enough to reduce it to its constituent elements. We must go beyond this, and endeavour to understand that principle of combination which produces the general effect as it expresses itself in thought and action, thus determining and

manifesting what we call character. In the study of human nature the attempt to know necessitates two distinct but closely related acts : that of separation, aiming at accuracy and clearness ; and that of combination, aiming at comprehensiveness and completeness.

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